

What is the basis for solidarity?



by B. Ann Lastelle

One union in Illinois, Allied Industrial Workers Local 837, its members locked out by A.E. Staley Manufacturing since June, has worked hard to develop something relatively rare these days: labor solidarity. It spearheaded a coalition including striking miners, United Auto Workers (UAW) members working without a contract at Caterpillar, locked-out utility workers and municipal employees struggling to negotiate their first contract.

Local 837 members have traveled throughout the Midwest to speak to unions and other organizations, raise funds and form support groups. They have gone door to door in their own community, Decatur. A particularly close relationship has developed between Local 837 and Caterpillar workers in Decatur, who have donated thousands of dollars at monthly plant gate collections.

WHY STRUGGLES ISOLATED?

Why, despite these efforts to connect struggles, do workers remain so isolated from each other? A striking miner speaking at an October labor rally in Chicago said, "We sometimes look around and wonder, 'Are we in this alone?'" During the three-day Caterpillar strike in November, a strike headquarters near Peoria, Ill., was plastered with "UAW members only" stickers. Workers on the picket line had "never heard" of the labor solidarity rally the weekend before in Decatur, only 75 miles away. Not only scabs, but truck drivers and railroad workers, cross the picket lines at Staley.

There is much talk in the Chicago-area Staley Workers Solidarity Committee of building a "resurgent labor movement." How can we?—especially since the percentage of unionized workers has fallen to levels not seen since before the CIO, and inner city Blacks and Latinos are virtually excluded from production. The Staley workers, miners and Cat workers are certainly militant

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Black World

Lenin and the Black dimension



by Lou Turner

On the eve of Black History Month, the 70th anniversary of the death of Vladimir Lenin this January provides a fresh opportunity to recover from the rubble of collapsed "Communism" that part of his legacy that intersects the revolutionary Black dimension.

Lenin's theoretical legacy intersects the Black dimension at two significant points. The first is on the national question, particularly as it was spelled out in his time as the "Negro question," meaning Black masses in motion. Radical Black thought as it was articulated by such leaders and intellectuals as Marcus Garvey, W.E.B. DuBois, Claude McKay, and a little-known founder of African-American Marxism, Lovett Fort-Whiteman, constitutes the second coordinate.

In the same year, 1915, that he compiled his voluminous "Notebooks on Imperialism," meticulously identifying the many and disparate national movements in the Third World, from Persia and Mexico to the fraternity between the Movement of Young Egypt and the Irish nationalist movement, to the Nama-Herero wars against German imperialism in Namibia, Lenin also wrote an extensive study on "New Data on the Laws Governing the Development of Capitalism in Agriculture" in America. Lenin, in the latter study, observed that far from the semi-feudal character of labor relations in southern agriculture constituting the sole determinant of the post-Reconstruction period, the fact that Blacks owned 14.5 % of the farms in the U.S., according to the 1910 census, revealed to what extent "The Negro urge to emancipation from the 'plantation owners' half a century after the 'victory' over the slave-owners is still marked by an exceptional intensity."¹

The year 1915 was also the year that DuBois wrote his incisive essay on the African roots of World War I. Only a year earlier, several weeks after the outbreak of World War I, Marcus Garvey and Amy Ashwood Garvey had founded the UNIA (Universal Negro Improvement Asso-

1. Lenin, Collected Works 22, p. 92.

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Decaying state of the nation

by Olga Domanski

The one-worldedness of the abysmal economic and social crises plaguing us, as 1994 begins, was brought into sharp focus by the way Bill Clinton wound up his first year in power—taking a trip to Europe during which he could not for one minute take his eyes off his problems at home. On his very first day home from his European trip, Clinton took the occasion of the Jan. 17 celebration of Martin Luther King's birthday to claim, in a speech at Howard University, that Dr. King would have supported what he accomplished in Europe for "peace, democracy and freedom." Nothing could be further from the truth.

EIGHT DAYS THAT DID NOT SHAKE THE WORLD

The eight-day trip to Brussels, Prague, Moscow, Minsk and Geneva had been designed to cast Clinton as a statesman and the U.S. as some sort of stabilizing force for a Europe in deep economic, political and social crisis. It was planned long before the Dec. 12 Russian elections, in which the virulent anti-Semitic and neo-fascist, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, won no less than 25% of the vote, exposing both how deep that crisis has grown and what it reflects of the dangers of a new kind of fascism arising in the world today.

In the face of that, whether or not the trip could be cast as a success in terms of furthering "peace, democracy and freedom" can hardly be measured in terms of the personality ratings his charm and performances at events such as the televised "town meeting" in Russia achieved, but has to begin with what the first of the trip's "summits," the meeting with 16 other heads of state who are members of NATO, revealed.

Whether it was offering the worried East European countries anxious to join NATO only "Partnerships for Peace" (and then selling it to them in Prague like a car salesman)—or whether it was making only one more totally empty "threat" of force against a Serbia driving to exterminate Bosnia—the total ambivalence that permeated every question taken up underlined what the outright genocide permitted in Bosnia had already exposed: that NATO, like all the political structures that defined the post-World War II world, is no more than a "carcass of dead policies."^{*}

* For an analysis of the economic, political and ideological crisis confronting the world since the collapse of Communism, see our Draft Perspectives Thesis for 1993-94, in the August-September 1993 issue of N&L.



Phoenix march on Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday.

As for the success of the demilitarization reached at the Moscow "summit," Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk's agreement to de-nuclearize the Ukrainian arsenal was immediately and loudly opposed by a large section of the Ukrainian parliament, which is needed for ratification; while even Clinton acknowledged that it would take only 15 seconds to reposition the missiles he and Boris Yeltsin agreed to stop pointing at each other.

It is the crisis within Russia itself, since the collapse of what called itself Communism, for which Clinton had absolutely nothing to offer. Even in the aftermath of Zhirinovskiy's shocking electoral victory, there had been

See "Where is Russia going?" page 5

only a momentary reversal in the West's demand that no financial help would be forthcoming until even more painful economic reforms were instituted.

HOW ARE WE DOING AT HOME?

The truth is, however, that from the beginning, despite the need Clinton felt to demonstrate his world "statesmanship," it was the state of his own nation right at home that was uppermost in his mind, as his first year in office was coming to an end. As he put it in his Howard University address to a predominantly Black audience: "As I come home on this Martin Luther King Day from a trip that fought for democracy and economic progress and security, I have to ask myself, 'How are we

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Chiapas insurrection opens 1994

Women in the revolt

Mexico City—On Jan. 1 women in Mexico were surprised by news of the revolt of indigenous women in Chiapas. According to the Zapatista National Liberation Army, the time has come to say enough to 500 years of exploitation and some 70 years of repressive government control and neoliberal exploitative economic policies.

Eyewitnesses to the capture of San Cristobal confirm there were about 1,500 Zapatistas, about a third of them women. There are women leaders, and women ages 15-20 have died.

In Chiapas, the vast wealth of natural resources contrasts to the great poverty of most of its people. Among 590,000 dwellings, one third have only one room where five or more people live. Three out of five households cook with wood or coal.

On the other hand, PEMEX [the state-owned petroleum industry] siphons off 92,000 barrels of crude oil each day from Chiapas, and extracts 516 million cubic feet of

More on Chiapas on page 9

natural gas each year. One fifth of the nation's petroleum production is taken out of this state.

Almost 60% of school age children do not attend school. Illiteracy in Chiapas is high. The causes of death, especially in the indigenous communities, are from curable diseases which killed 15,000 people in 1992.

Chiapas is basically an agricultural state which lags way behind on the social scale due to extreme widespread poverty and racial discrimination. In this setting, women undertake their traditional domestic roles in primitive conditions which cause them to have to work 16-18 hours a day carrying water and gathering firewood, grinding corn, caring for animals; venturing out to sell small amounts of produce, making long trips to find something to eat and on many occasions, helping their men during harvest. Their cultural traditions still involve arranged marriages, educating girls to obey and serve. Illiteracy among women is twice that of men, and very young girls help their mothers take care of their

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Zapatista rebels in Chiapas, Mexico.

We are a product of 500 years of struggle: first against slavery, then during the War of Independence against Spain led by insurgents, then to avoid being absorbed, by North American imperialism, then to promulgate our constitution and expel the French empire from our soil, and later the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz denied us the just application of the Reform laws and the people rebelled and leaders like Villa and Zapata emerged, poor men just like us.

We have been denied the most elemental preparation so they can use us as cannon fodder and pillage the wealth of our country. They don't care that we have nothing, absolutely nothing, not even a roof over our heads, no land, no work, no health care, no food nor education. Nor are we able to freely and democratically elect our political representatives, nor is there independence from foreigners, nor is there peace or justice for ourselves and our children.

But today, we say ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. We are the inheritors of the true builders of our nation.

From the Declaration of the Zapatista National Liberation Army

Black women's conference draws 2000

by Diane Lee

Over 2,000 Black women scholars and activists attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology conference called "Black Women in the Academy: Defending Our Name, 1894-1994," in Cambridge, Jan. 13-15. The idea for the title came from the events at the Columbian World Exposition in Chicago in 1893, where Black men and women were denied full representation. However, as Robin Kilson, one of the organizers, said, the idea for the conference was born in the kitchen of Black feminist theorist Nellie McKay in discussing the need for women of color to have a space of their own where "our work could be presented in loud and ringing tones."

Woman as Reason

It was very exciting to see women present from as far away as the Netherlands and the Caribbean along with African-American women from a multitude of universities and fields of study.

Emily, a young Black feminist from Chicago, spoke to us about the conference: "I was impressed by the range of different types of women there and of the desire to expand what the academy is to include all kinds of people. I saw a push to break down the walls between the academy and the community. In one workshop, after a woman asked for financial help for a Black independent school she works for, \$900 was raised."

The conference had three major plenary sessions with Lani Guinier, Johnetta Cole and Angela Davis as keynote speakers, along with 61 workshops.

What was moving about the first plenary was that it gave Lani Guinier a platform to present her views. She spoke with biting sarcasm and wit about her experience of being asked by Clinton to be Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights. She compared it to Alice in Wonderland where things got "curiouser and curiouser." "I came to represent America's worst fears about race. I was outside the mainstream of polite society. I was said to be Clinton's quota queen. Like Alice, my original ideas were never to emerge."

Nevertheless, Guinier is caught in the contradiction of clinging to the notion that democracy really exists in the U.S. for Black people, while encouraging everyone to write to Clinton to demand a new Kerner Commission Report. This contradiction set the tone for much of the discussion. It is not unrelated to a kind of careerism which saw many women at the plenary introducing

Chiapas women revolt

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brothers. With married couples, the woman has to serve the owners on coffee plantations alongside the man who is exploited as a worker.

The Mexican government's immediate response to the peoples' suffering has been the arrival of thousands of soldiers in the area and the bombardment of villages. While President Salinas spoke of a truce on Jan. 12, it was a lie whenever they came across Zapatista fighters. To this we add the army's abuses: summary executions, jailing innocent people, kidnapping, robbery, and seizing the leaders of indigenous peasant organizations.

This type of desperate armed uprising is not unusual in Chiapas. Since 1712 there have been records of revolts by the Tzeltal people who fought to maintain their own religion against that of the colonizers, and we have found women played a central role in this struggle. It was started that year by a young woman named Maria Candelaria, and in 1868 Agustina Gomez Checheo in Chamulas said that the voice of God spoke to her through the stones of Chiapas. The social protest by thousands of Indians was organized around what these women began.

The Mexican Revolution of 1910 never came to Chiapas because the landowners stopped it. Again in 1974 and 1980 there were many repressive acts carried out on small *ejidos*: houses burned, jailings, leaders were tortured. One well-known event involved the massacre and burning of houses in the Tzeltal community of Wolochan in 1980. The people were protesting over land rights and the *caciques* called in the army to put them down. The most recent group of governors, one of them a military man, have carried out a systematic repression, aided by the army and their own police called, White Guards.

Since the events of 1974 and 1980, the participation of indigenous women has been more apparent and defined. They have begun to join the men in the struggle for land now that the women and peasants have formed many organizations to fight for their rights.

Indigenous women's organizations have been operating for a decade. Some of these organizations no longer exist because of the classic conflict which men devise whenever they're confronted with the ideological progress of women. But the hope for change has not ended in spite of these failures. Instead it has tended to lead to development. Surely this growth on the part of indigenous women has demanded creativity, as much in the kinds of demands they have raised concerning the problems of survival as in the forms of organization. Women have joined in supporting the demands of their male comrades and, little by little, this has evolved to help in understanding the problems they identify as women, and has expanded their perspective in seeing that gender conflicts historically have shaped all social relations.

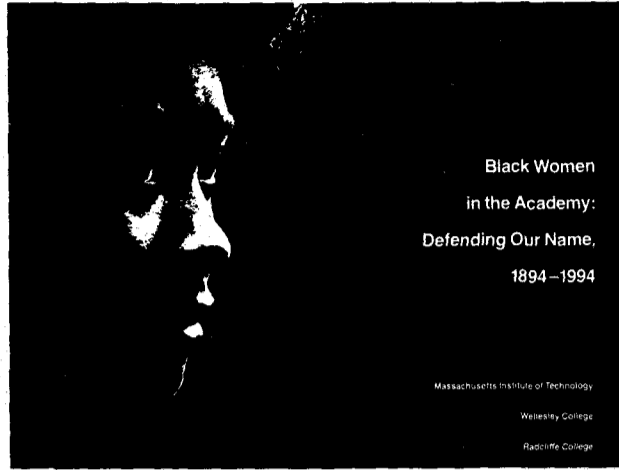
—Women for Dialogue, Network for Latin American Popular Education Among Women

themselves by stating their university and degree they have or are attaining.

Although the vast multidimensionality of the conference cannot be covered here, several workshops illustrate how seriously many of the participants sought to combine thought and reality.

At one workshop called "The Truth of Our Lives: Black Women's Narratives as Primary Knowledge Sources," Lucille Fultz spoke about Toni Morrison's uses of history. She constructs narrative lives, not fictionalized histories. Morrison's work, she said, "is where

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Women's Writes

Women in Black newsletter, P.O. Box 6360 Jerusalem, Israel 91060, \$20 subscription, is put out by Israeli Women who stand vigils each week calling for an end to the occupation. It carries news from Women in Black in Germany and Belgrade, as well as "Letters from Around the Globe." Issue No. 6 carried lively responses to a study: "Why has the Israeli Women in Black vigil persevered over five years?" Maya Rosenfeld critiques the report for "the absence of all mention of the intifada." Issue No. 6 also published a critique of the Israeli peace movement by Simona Sharoni: "Excluded from the leadership, women were prevented from offering, as feminists, radical challenges to the rhetoric of 'national security.'" —Terry Moon

Katie Roiphe's *The Morning After: Sex, Fear, and Feminism on Campus* uses the same sexist arguments we are bombarded with daily. She twists everything, claiming she is for freedom, while the movement is pushing women backwards; by recognizing our victimization, we create its reality. We don't have a rape crisis, we have a "sexual identity crisis," a fear of "broken rules." She is for "strong individuals." There should be no Take Back the Night marches, no date rape prevention.

She rejects Women's Liberation: "Once you...include everyone's everyday experience, identifying sexual harassment becomes a way of interpreting the social texture of daily life, instead of isolating individual events....[It] becomes a way of seeing the world." (p.100). Roiphe is trying to push us back to days prior to "the personal is political." —Sonia Bergonzi

Letter from Mauritius

We are writing to keep you informed about a serious attack on freedom of expression on a women's issue in Mauritius. On Dec. 3, Lindsey Collen, a member of Muvman Liberasyon Fam, launched her second novel, *The Rape of Sita*. It is about sexual violence against women and women's rights in general. Muvman Liberasyon Fam has a long experience of having to oppose anti-women fundamentalist moves on the questions of marriage laws and legalization of abortion.

The Hindu Council objected violently to the title, saying it represented an outrage against the Hindu religion. They had not even bothered to read it. The problem comes from the fact that Sita is a very common woman's name here, as well as the name of the character in the Ramayana that symbolizes purity and virtue. The fundamentalists consider women's virtue tainted by rape.

Lindsey Collen started receiving threats of violence by anonymous telephone calls. On Dec. 7, the Prime Minister under pressure from Hindu fundamentalists made a statement in the National Assembly declaring the book an "outrage against public and religious morality," and went so far as to say the book was "blasphemous." He had not read it, but had "glanced" at the covers.

This is probably the first time the Prime Minister in a secular state has taken it upon himself to declare a novel "blasphemous," a privilege usually claimed by Ayatollahs in religious states. He ended by asking the police to take action against Collen under a section of the Criminal Code that carries a one year jail sentence.

Lindsey Collen and Ledikasyon Pu Travayer, the publisher, chose to withdraw the book and consider altering the title. After threats from the fundamentalists decreased, the book is being received as one of the best works of literature ever produced in the country. Enough copies are in circulation to make this possible.

We are keeping you informed because we expect this battle against state repression will be a long one. We may need to call on you for support in this struggle, and to put *The Rape of Sita* back into circulation.

—Muvman Liberasyon Fam

♀ Women Worldwide

Women workers in Colombia's lucrative flower industry continue fighting against dangerous pesticides threatening their lives and the lives of their families. Flowers are one of Colombia's main exports and the U.S. is the leading importer. At least 70% of that industry's 140,000 workers are women—mainly single mothers. Exposed to pesticides without masks or protective clothing, these women suffer from cancers, bronchial diseases and skin diseases and their children are often born with deformities and genetic diseases. The ground and water around their homes are also contaminated. Women who tried to organize a union have been fired, discriminated against, and worse, but they have not given up.

—Information from New Directions for Women

Families of Irish women branded as "immoral" in the 1800s by the Catholic Church and banished, often for a lifetime, to church-run laundries for no pay are fighting for an official apology from the church and the erection of a memorial "to celebrate their lives and reclaim their spirit." Several months ago, the church secretly exhumed the bodies of 133 of these "fallen" women, called Magdalens, from unmarked graves in Dublin, cremated and reburied them elsewhere after selling the cemetery to a land developer. The women, often single mothers, were sent to these workhouses by their parish priests as penance. Family members formed the Magdalen Memorial Committee, condemning the church's actions saying "these women were disgraced in life and now they have been dishonored in death."

Rowbotham fragments grassroots struggles

Los Angeles, Cal.—On Jan. 14, socialist-feminist historian Sheila Rowbotham presented a talk at UCLA, "Feminism and Women's Social Protest." Rowbotham's theme was her "dilemma" in confronting the fact that many 1980s grassroots movements of women, especially in the Third World, did not start from protests against their situation as women, but were focused on issues such as conditions in shantytowns, struggles in the workplace, questions of the environment, or human rights. How do we "define" these movements? Definitions are not academic exercises: "How feminist theory develops has an impact in life."

Rowbotham stated that she would wish "feminism" to signal an inclusive politics, encompassing not only issues specifically related to the relationships between men and women but "a wider vision connected to anti-imperialism and trade unions." But she considered it dangerous to impose her political assumptions on others.

I realized she was still floundering in the same "dilemma" she voiced 20 years ago in her ground-breaking work, *Women, Resistance and Revolution* (1972). There, despite unearthing the magnificent struggles of working-class women throughout history, she concluded that "The connection between the oppression of women and the central discovery of Marxism, the class exploitation of the worker in capitalism, is still...coming out of the head of women like me as an idea." (p.247)

Today, Rowbotham still insists that, as a Left, feminist intellectual, she "would like" to categorize as a unity the diverse forms of women's freedom struggles, but is restrained by their content. There is no such unity in life. Further, two decades of work has apparently convinced Rowbotham that (1) she should drop any discussion of "Marxism"; and (2) she should forego any attempt to create a unified theoretical perspective.

What makes this astonishing is that many of the creative women's struggles Rowbotham cited showed the exact contrary of what she concluded. Within these "grassroots movements of women demanding access to social resources" is the development of a multifaceted concept of women's struggles and passions, with issues of the power relationships between men and women becoming one dimension. Rowbotham noted women's economic and social protests often became bound up with domestic violence, as husbands reacted aggressively against their wives' new-found roles.

Why does Rowbotham's theoretical focus remain the fragmentation of women's struggles—"either" they struggle as workers "or" as community activists "or" as women—rather than how the depth, creativity, and thought of these women in movement often carries within what Marx called the "quest for universality"—the drive for wholeness, for a new way of life in which all can develop as full human beings. It is not only "Marxism" that Rowbotham has dropped any reference to; "revolution" and "freedom" likewise have fallen off the map.

The best she offered us—as theory derived from what she heard these movements of women saying in practice—was "thinking differently about the market and the role of the state...for a collective monitoring of how resources come from the state versus just assuming that state provision of needs will solve all problems."

How can she so narrow what she hears? Her problem is not "elitism"; she is so "anti-elitist" that she does not want to "impose" categories. But being against "imposition" need not mean abdication of theoretic/philosophic responsibility, the need to meet the creativity of the movement from practice with an articulation of the Idea of freedom and its potential for realization in life, in our times.

—Michelle Landau

'Value time' and injuries at GM

Oklahoma City, Okla.—This last United Auto Workers contract with General Motors came out in the newspapers like it's something special. Really all it was was a bunch of givebacks. They're taking our \$600 Christmas bonus and five days of our vacation to pay for two weeks of their downtime at model changeover. It used to be we collected unemployment and SUB (Supplemental Unemployment Benefits) pay for that. That's well over \$1200 per employee.

There's that, and cutting the labor. They take a job on the line, break it down and spread it around to other workers that they feel have time to do the work. A guy who worked across from me was doing his job. They added work to it, and he could no longer do it. They put him out on medical several times. Anybody they can, they try to get you out on medical or early retirement.

Some people write 78s (grievances) on it. All that happens is the company and the union go to time and motion studies and, if the time works out, you have to do it. Every spot on that car has a time and motion study. They have what they call value time and non-value time. Then they have standing around time, which they call something else.

Non-value time is reaching back and picking up the spot welder or walking to the spot welder. Then you swing the gun into the job, and that's still non-value time. The minute you pull the trigger and spot weld the car, that's value time, and the sparks fly and sometimes

you get burnt. They add up how many one-hundredths of a minute it takes in value time and non-value time, then multiply by the line speed, which is 75 jobs per hour. If that time comes up to less than 55 minutes to the hour, then they feel they can add work to the job.

My job started out being the worst job in the pit. I stayed on it because the spot welder is straight in and straight out, and it's the twisting and turning that tears up your wrists—and your shoulder and your back muscles. The guy next to me, they put work on him. He has gone in for cortisone shots in his shoulder. He was doing the job and not having pain before they added all the work to it.

Now this is just hearsay, but I heard that one guy jumped on a supervisor, saying this added work was going to get a lot of people injured. The supervisor supposedly just plainly said, "It may get people hurt, but we're still going to add work and eliminate labor."

They added work before they started working us nine hours every day and one Saturday this month, two Saturdays next month and three the following month. As I have heard workers here say so many times, "and General Motors still isn't happy." —Line worker

Labor shakes up Memphis

Memphis, Tenn.—Angry rank-and-file union activists have shaken up the city of Memphis. Several hundred union members marched on Dec. 11 from the Martin Luther King, Jr. Labor Center on Beale Street to the I-40 bridge over the Mississippi River, then blocked the bridge entrance. The demonstrators included workers from Dobbs International, who have been on strike against the caterer for nearly one year (see N&L, December 1993), and workers from Earle Industries, a plastics manufacturer in Earle, Ark., who have been fighting for a contract since they voted to be represented by the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers in 1991.

Annie Rolack, chief steward for Teamsters Local 667 at Dobbs, said that they were "sick of being shut out of the media. We have 120 workers on strike because we will not allow the company to disrespect older African-American women, forcing them out of their jobs after 20 years of service or more. We have to wake up the government, the media, the public."

"We marched to the Front St. entrance to the bridge and blocked it for two or three hours," said Ida Leachman, vice-president of Furniture Workers Local 282. "People just sat down in the street. The police kept saying that if we didn't leave we would be arrested. Traffic on the bridge to Arkansas was totally tied up."

"Finally, they started to put people in police cars, but there were so many willing to get arrested that they decided to take them out of the cars and parade all those arrested to the police station. About 100 were arrested."

Workers were protesting slow action or no action by the NLRB (Labor Board) on union unfair labor practice complaints at Dobbs and Earle Industries and were calling attention to workers' struggles throughout the mid-South region. The demonstration cracked the media silence. "We had to do something like this," said Annie Rolack. "It's a matter of getting people to realize that what happened to us could happen to them. Our fight is not really about money, but about human dignity."

At the Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial march in Memphis on Jan. 17, a labor contingent including Dobbs workers passed out leaflets reading "Keep the Dream Alive in 1994. Take a Stand for Justice." They called on Memphians to send Dobbs a message to settle the strike and let employees return to work. A letter to Dobbs president Frederick J. Martin from Bishop J.O. Patterson of the Church of God in Christ, urging that the strikers' rights be respected, was included in the leaflet.

At Dobbs International, at Earle Industries and at many other plants in the area, companies have used every means at their disposal—both legal and illegal—to attempt to halt growing union organization and avoid real contract negotiations. Ida Leachman's message: "There is a real fight going on here; it's not over yet."

Contact the Dobbs strikers at Teamsters Local 667, 796 East Brooks Road, Memphis, TN 38116.

—Michael Flug

Celebrate Black History Month!

Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal
To order, see literature ad on page 7.

Miners' pact price high

Uniontown, Pa.—"It's a company contract...a slave contract," declared a Consolidation Coal Company miner in Pennsylvania in reaction to the United Mine Workers (UMWA) five-year contract approved in December following a bitter, seven-month strike against the Bituminous Coal Operators Association that involved 17,500 of the union's 80,000 members.

UMWA District 4 miners in southwest Pennsylvania rejected the contract by a 2-to-1 margin. Significantly, most of the miners in District 4 who had been on strike voted against the pact. They had suffered the most, but were willing to stay out until they got a decent contract.

A major objective of the strike, job security, sought to eliminate the practice by coal operators of closing union mines, transferring coal reserves to newly-created subsidiaries and reopening the "new" mines as non-union. The new contract requires that at least 60% of the work force of such new mines be union miners. This will certainly help in the short term, but will hardly provide real job security or halt layoffs in an industry where the average life of existing mines is only seven years.

As for wages, miners will get an increase of \$1.30 an hour over the first three years of the contract, and the union can reopen wage talks for the last two years. The price to the rank-and-file miners, however, will be very high. In addition to the first-ever five-year contract, provisions will:

- Permit ten-hour shifts four days a week with no overtime pay plus special shift arrangements for Sunday coal production.

- Make miners and their families pay more for health care if they go to doctors or health facilities not approved by the coal companies. Before, they could go to the health care providers of their choice without penalty.

- Try to force miners to cut down on health care by giving each working miner a check for \$1000 at the beginning of the year, with the miner able to keep whatever is not spent on health care by the end of the year.

The bottom line of this contract is clear: each one of these provisions gives the companies greater power over the lives of the miners—both inside and outside the mines. In addition, a Labor Management Positive Change Program is established to provide the framework for worker-management "cooperation," which will result in even more concessions to the companies.

—Andy Phillips

Chinese women strike

New York, N.Y.—Forty-four workers at the Silver Palace, the only unionized restaurant in Chinatown, were locked out last August after they refused to accept drastic cuts in pay and benefits and illegal terms of the new contract. Silver Palace workers have been represented by a small, independent union, the 318 Restaurant Workers Union, since 1981. They have been picketing the restaurant every lunch and dinner. Two women discussed the strike and their lives with News & Letters:

"We're fighting for justice, not only for ourselves but for the whole Chinese community. Most Chinese immigrants work under slave conditions, often for 60-80



hours a week for illegally low wages. The garment shops are just as bad as the restaurants. All the bosses think immigrant women will not fight back.

"The Silver Palace was different after we got the union. We had health insurance, paid holidays and job security. It was the only restaurant where you did not have to work more than 40 hours a week. If we worked overtime we were paid time and a half or could take comp leave. Now all of that is gone.

"The bosses didn't pay the dim sum workers (women who push carts around the dining room) what the contract called for. They decided to fire the older dim sum workers because we had the most seniority and fought for our contract rights. They said we are not as attractive as young women, and they want young, pretty women to bring in the customers.

"At the fifth bargaining session, the bosses announced we must accept all their terms, which were even worse than some non-union restaurants. All 44 dining room workers agreed to reject their demands. After 11 bargaining sessions, the bosses imposed the new contract.

"We could not have kept up the struggle without the support of our families. They have no money; their support is spiritual. We've had support on the picket line from Blacks, Latinos and whites as well as Chinese. Since I came from China I've never been outside Chinatown, but now I'm learning that other people in this country are exploited as well.

"Why are working conditions so bad in this country? In Chinatown I have to work even harder than I did in China. I came here six years ago thinking things would be better because you have democracy. But nothing is better except that my daughter can get an education."

Joanne Lum of the Chinese Staff and Workers Association added, "We had to organize an independent union 14 years ago because the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union was not interested in us. This is a common experience."

The Women's Action Coalition (WAC) will hold a benefit for the strikers and a demonstration at the Silver Palace Feb. 13. Contributions to the strike fund can be sent to: 318 Restaurant Union, c/o Chinese Staff and Workers Association, 15 Catherine St., #2-R, New York, NY 10038.

Anne Jaclard

Workshop Talks

(continued from page 1)

enough. What more is needed?

One way to approach this question is through Marx's 1845 critique of "all hitherto existing materialism" for not conceiving "human activity itself as objective activity" ("Theses on Feuerbach," I). Raya Dunayevskaya, in her development of Marxist-Humanism, elaborated what she called "a new sense of objectivity" about the economic-political stage in which we live, state-capitalism. That new sense of objectivity "began to be seen in the context of Marx's new sense of objectivity in relationship to all human activity" ("Not By Practice Alone: The Movement from Theory" in *The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism*, p. 12).

Dunayevskaya projected this new sense of objectivity as "dealing with when subjectivity is actually objective" (my emphasis). Masses in motion, human activity, the whole person—body, emotion, thought—are as real, as objective as capitalism. Because that is so, subjectivity "in the universal sense includes the theory," the self-determination of the Idea. The Idea of freedom itself is objective; it has the power to transform reality.

FREEDOM NOT ABSTRACT

That may seem abstract, but it really isn't. The Idea of freedom was the motive force behind much of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. Michael Flug, a former CORE member active with the hospital and retail workers of the Maryland Freedom Union, spoke of this at an April conference in Memphis:

"By the mid-1960s independent unions rooted in the Civil Rights Movement began to emerge... What drew so many workers to the 'freedom union' experiments of SNCC and CORE during the 1960s was not only that these unions were willing to accept them as members when most 'mainstream' unions remained uninterested in them. It was that these organizations called themselves 'freedom unions,' and sought to organize low-wage workplaces as an integral part of a struggle to transform the whole of American society."

What is abstract, it seems to me, are slogans such as "Illinois is a War Zone" and "It's Our Solidarity vs. Theirs," which attempt to unite labor struggles. If I support your struggle on principle, which I do, what does that mean for my freedom, as a woman, as a non-union worker? Doesn't that relationship have to be worked out? Isn't the pathway toward a "resurgent labor movement" recognizing the power of the Idea of freedom to transform reality and working out what freedom means as against this racist, sexist, locked-out, no contract, no union, no job society?

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From the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya Marxist-Humanist Archives

Remembering Rosa Luxemburg as revolutionary, as theorist

Editor's note: As part of "Three L" month, commemorating the deaths of Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht (both Jan. 15, 1919), and V. I. Lenin (Jan. 21, 1924), we are reprinting three letters on Rosa Luxemburg from Raya Dunayevskaya: 1) to Isabel do Carmo, chairwoman of the Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat/Revolutionary Brigades (PRP-BR) during the Portuguese Revolution (microfilm #6448-9); 2) to Erich Fromm and Fromm's reply (#15073-4), and 3) to News and Letters Committees, about her writing of what would become Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution (#6648).

The Portuguese revolution

October 4, 1976

Dear Comrade Isabel do Carmo,
In this letter, I wish to limit myself to the topic, "Rosa Luxemburg and Today's Theorists in the Women's Liberation Movement," which is the tentative title of my next book. I am most anxious to learn your views on this topic. Two of the statements you have made in your writings relate to it—one, to the question of the relationship of theory to practice in general, and the other to Rosa Luxemburg in particular. You wrote that PRP, since it was a revolutionary organization in Portugal today, didn't relate to only one Marxist theoretician alone, but to Marx and Lenin, to Trotsky and Luxemburg. May I ask which of Luxemburg's theories—The General Strike, the relationship of spontaneity to organization, the Russian Revolution, the Shop Stewards and the German Revolution, as well as the theory of capital accumulation—do you consider most relevant for today? You will note that in *Marxismo y libertad* Chapter 8, the second section "Apariencia y realidad," I strongly criticize her theory, Accumulation of Capital, which doesn't mean that she hasn't made a great revolutionary contribution, both theoretically and practically.¹

accident at all, turned out to be the most revolutionary section of the German Social Democracy once World War I broke out.

The phrase that I consider most distinctive to characterize the Women's Liberation Movement is "Woman as Reason as well as Force." It is this which prompts my preoccupation with Women's Liberation. I am especially annoyed with today's women theorists who, even when they consider themselves revolutionaries, act as if Marx contributed nothing to that subject, although he is the founder of all of us, and although he not only, as far back as 1844 when he first broke with bourgeois society, wrote of man/woman as the most fundamental question which exposed the alienation of capitalism, but also was actually active in women's movements both in England and France. (Have you by any chance read *The Women Incendiaries* by Edith Thomas who, despite the Anglo-Saxon name, has written a fairly recent work on the Paris Commune, in French?)

Finally, no question today can be seriously considered if one separates revolution from philosophy. Because it is the unity of philosophy and revolution that alone will be able to move us of today from the constant, aborted revolutions, to one that will actually be. I became quite excited when I first read the Draft Program of the PRP which stated: "It is also the organization capable of making a synthesis between theory and revolutionary practice." (Have you read "Will the revolution in Portugal advance?" in the January-February 1976 *News & Letters*? The dialectics of liberation demands the working out of so new a relationship of theory and practice, that we must start with the new concept which Lenin first projected when he returned to Hegelian dialectics as of the essence for the revolution-to-be in Russia in 1917, but never worked out in as total a way as our age demands....

Luxemburg revises Marx

January 14, 1980

Dear Friends:
Chapter III³, which I have just completed, is at first glance so totally different from anything else I have written or spoken about Luxemburg that I consider it important to call it to your attention. First is the question of the title: "Luxemburg's Interregnum on the Way to New Theory; and Excursus on Why a Century to Publish Marx's Works?" Both the fact that it is an interregnum, and that it comes, not in 1910-11, but after that period, as she is beginning to work out her greatest theoretical work, *Accumulation of Capital* (her greatest work, not the greatest theoretical work; indeed, it would be a deviation from Marx's theory of accumulation of capital), mark a new stage in comprehension of the dialectic. Perhaps I should have said, instead of "comprehension," a great inadequacy in the comprehension of dialectic. It was comparatively easy for Rosa Luxemburg to defend Marx against a revisionist's demand for the "removal of the dialectic scaffolding." It is a very different thing when, in facing a new reality—imperialism—one feels no compulsion to dig into the "dialectic." The task is that of the reworking of the whole of Marx's deep-rootedness in the Hegelian dialectic and Marxian creativity of trans-

forming dialectical methodology into dialectics of liberation.

Therefore, whereas previously I had only hinted at it, in this Chapter I have developed the fact that Luxemburg always disagreed with Marx's concept of self-determination of nations in general and of Poland in particular. I want you to get a whiff of that from a magnificent



Rosa Luxemburg

letter Engels wrote to Kautsky about two weeks after he had co-authored with Marx that fantastic prophetic new Preface to the Russian edition of the Communist Manifesto, which had projected the possibility of Russia having a revolution in advance of the industrially developed nations. Here it is, dated February 7, 1882:

Polish socialists who do not place the liberation of their country at the head of their program appear to me as would German socialists who do not demand first and foremost repeal of the socialist law, freedom of the press, association and assembly... It is unimportant whether a reconstitution of Poland is possible before the next revolution. We have in no case the task to deter the Poles from their efforts to fight for the vital conditions of their future development, or to persuade them that national independence is a very secondary matter from the international point of view. On the contrary, independence is the basis of any common international action... We, in particular, have no reason whatever to block their irrefutable striving for independence. In the first place, they have invented and applied in 1863 the method of fighting...and secondly they were the only reliable and capable lieutenants in the Paris Commune.

I am using very little of the draft chapter on the *Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx*, except for the first section, and even in that the paragraphs are considerably transposed. What I am now calling *Excursus* into why it took a century to publish all of Marx's works is not tied in Chapter III to the Man/Woman relationship, but to what resulted from Marx's delving into primitive societies insofar as it related to the Russian conditions. To put it differently, what has to be the pivotal point for this excursus is tied to the concreteness of the book and the specific subject of Rosa Luxemburg in the 1905 Revolution. No doubt I will later in the book return again to the rest of what I had written last year on the *Ethnological Notebooks*, except that I will definitely reduce [Hal] Draper to a long footnote—but it is really more relevant to our age than to the manner in which male-chauvinism appeared in Luxemburg's period. Here, what we have to learn methodologically is that, no matter how comprehensively you think you have dealt with a subject, the aspect that makes it concrete in a historic period is the only proof.

Let me cite one other section of Chapter III, which relates to the question of dialectics in another new way. In 1903, Luxemburg had written an essay on "The Progress and Stagnation of Marxism." At first reading, that looks like the highest compliment to Marx's Marxism, since the essence of it is that not only has Marxism not stagnated, but we, the Marxists, haven't yet reached the totality of historical materialism. On second reading, you suddenly begin to realize what a very big gap there was in the thought of Marxists once Marx died, because far from regarding Marx's thought as a whole new continent, they regarded Marx as a revolutionary economist who taught them all about the class struggle. Just as Engels thought that he was following out a bequest of Marx when he wrote *The Origin of the Family*, so Luxemburg thought she was on the way to "extending" Marx's theory of *Accumulation of Capital* by concentrating on the new reality and sloughing off the dialectic as "rococo."

But that will be for Chapter IV. Here what is crucial—whether you consider it as an entirely new idea or as a further development of Chapters I and II—is that a transition period can be either a great leap forward or a fall backward—not, however, as retrogression, but as an illumination of what happens when the dialectic is kept only in the back of your mind. The very nearly subordinate point I am trying to make is that Luxemburg's "Progress and Stagnation of Marxism" is used as a transition point between her very wrong position on the National Question, dialectically as well as factually, and the move towards a new theory which deviates not from Kautsky but from Marx...

3. Dunayevskaya explained later: "It should be noted that during the process of the book chapters were changed and that the chapter numbers referred to...do not necessarily correspond to the chapter numbers in the published work."

To Erich Fromm on Penthesilea and patriarchy

October 20, 1977

Dear Erich Fromm:
Instead of trying to explain the long silence (especially since the German edition of *Philosophy and Revolution* has once again been delayed), may I start right off by asking you whether I may engage in a dialogue with you on Rosa Luxemburg? There is a very specific field that I thought you would be most profound in—the difference between correspondence, especially with women, and the writings (very nearly non-existent) on that very subject, Women. I'm not referring to the fact that they were on flowers, cats, or other small talk. Rather I am referring to the very sharp attacks on their reformist husbands, there using many references to mythical or long-ago historical characters—Penthesilea, the queen of the Amazons. The letter I have in mind is the one to Mathilde Wurm on New Year's Day 1917. I was so surprised at that particular reference that I went to the trouble to look up, which, specifically, event she was referring to and it was Achilles who slew Penthesilea when she took the side of the Trojans—and then praised her bravery, etc.² Russell, in his work on the Oriental Heritage as well as the Greek, mentions that the Greek Urn that Keats wrote that magnificent ode to (which he, Durant, prefers above the urn) may have been the other one where Achilles spears Penthesilea.
Now, my question is: what has all this to do with the Second International's betrayal, 1914, and how does it happen that whereas [she] kept away from the "Woman Question" other than what all Marxists were for—equal wages, suffrage, etc.—[she] would certainly go to mythology and the roles of women as greater than life? Was it common to show that one's interest in literature, in

character building, in self-development of idea though one kept strictly to economics-politics in books, pamphlets? Did you by any chance know people who knew her? I remember [Herbert] Marcuse (who was evidently a young Spartacist in the Army at the time Rosa was murdered) speaking gloriously of her as orator? There seems a great contradiction between her awareness that there is more to the "Woman Question" than economics in letters as contrasted to books, pamphlets, etc. I would love to get the feeling of the times—Germany, women, intellectuals between WWI and WWII....

26th October 1977

Dear R.D.,
Thank you for your letter of October 20th...[T]he topic you write about fascinates me so much that I want to send you a line. I feel that the male Social Democrats never could understand Rosa Luxemburg, nor could she acquire the influence for which she had the potential because she was a woman; and the men could not become full revolutionaries because they did not emancipate themselves from their male, patriarchal, and hence dominating, character structure. After all, the original exploitation is that of women by men and there is no social liberation as long as there is no revolution in the sex war ending in full equality, which has never existed since prehistory. I believe she was one of the few fully developed human beings, one who showed what a human being can be in the future. Indeed, as you say, she was not concerned with the woman's question which is, after all, only the human question; in this respect quite the contrary to Klara Zetkin, the bureaucratic leader of the allegedly revolutionary woman's movement. Unfortunately I have known nobody who still knows her personally. What a bad break between the generations....
Yours,
Erich Fromm....

2. From prison, Luxemburg wrote to Mathilde Wurm (12/28/16), "I'm telling you that as soon as I can stick my nose out again I will hunt and harry your society of frogs with trumpet blasts, whip crackings, and bloodhounds—like Penthesilea I wanted to say, but by God, you people are no Achilles," a reference to dramatist Heinrich von Kleist's reversal of the Greek myth of Achilles slaying Penthesilea.

by Peter Hudis

Recent events in Russia have proved so startling as to raise new questions, not only about where Russia is headed, but about the very nature of the much-heralded "post-Cold War world." Though Clinton tried his best during his recent visit to Moscow to pretend that "all was on course" in Russia's plunge to create a "free market," even the Pollyannas in his administration now see that a new reality is afoot.

That new reality was brought to the fore by the Dec. 12 parliamentary elections, in which the party of neo-fascist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy won more votes than anyone else, capturing 25% of the popular vote. The rise of this self-proclaimed "Russian nationalist" who has openly compared himself to Hitler¹ has virtually overnight exposed the hollowness of the notion that Russia's drive to the "free market" will lead to more "democracy."

As if this were not enough, the Dec. 12 elections also saw the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and its ally, the Agrarian Party, capture 20% of the vote. Since then they have teamed up with Zhirinovskiy to elect a new speaker of parliament opposed to the pace of Yeltsin's economic reforms. Thus, like so many heads sprung from the neck of Hydra, the "Red-Brown" alliance of Communists and fascists which Yeltsin thought he had crushed back in October is back in new guise.

Though Zhirinovskiy is far to the right of Yeltsin, Yeltsin can hardly be counted on to sear the roots of this re-nascent fascism with blazing branches, given the fact that he has assumed increasingly reactionary positions of his own. Whatever be the future of Zhirinovskiy himself, the forces that gave birth to him will surely impact the Russian scene for some time.

What, then, explains the emergence of this retrogressive phenomenon? What does it say about the whole "reform" process in Russia? And what lessons does it hold for us here in the U.S.?

ECONOMIC ROOTS OF POLITICAL REGRESSION

It is not hard to see that Russia's move toward greater authoritarianism and even neo-fascism flows from the severity of its economic crisis. Since 1992 industrial production has declined 40%, real wages are down by 80%, and inflation is averaging close to 20% a month. Almost half the population has fallen below the officially designated poverty line.

Yet a powerful ideological illusion has obscured the link between the specific nature of Russia's economic crisis and the rise of fascists like Zhirinovskiy: the notion that the transition from the "planned" economy to the "free market" engenders greater democracy. The events since 1992 show the very opposite is the case.

To trace this out we must keep in mind that the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 did not lead to any fundamental uprooting of the old order. Despite the claim that the collapse of "Communism" marked a "world historic event" comparable to the 1917 Russian Revolution, the class nature of the old regime was not destroyed. Though the state-capitalist rulers changed their political allegiances from "Marxism-Leninism" to "free market" capitalism virtually overnight, the structure of labor-management relations was left intact. This has determined the nature of Yeltsin's efforts at "economic reform" since 1992.²

One of Yeltsin's most important steps in moving Russia toward a "market economy" was the removal of price restraints on an array of goods and services in January 1992. This freeing up of prices, it was argued, would end the endemic shortages plaguing the economy, as an economic incentive would be provided for producers to increase output.

Yet this isn't what resulted. Since the managers of industry retained monopolistic control over the production process, with a handful of factories often producing the bulk of a given commodity group, they responded to the liberalization of prices by cutting back on production and hoarding output in order to obtain the highest price possible. This enabled a few to reap hefty profits while the bulk of the populace suffered under the twin blow of shortages and high prices.

The next crucial step came in July 1992, when Yeltsin announced a new privatization law calling for state enterprises to be transformed into joint-stock companies. This extended Gorbachev's 1988 decision to allow for the formation of commercial enterprises and cooperatives alongside state-run industries.

These moves toward privatization were likewise shaped by the way the managers of old remained in command. Many of them have used their access to power and privilege to set up new "privatized" ventures alongside their state-run enterprises. They then resell the goods produced by the state enterprise to their privately owned company, which in turn resells them at a huge markup to the public. Huge profits are thereby made by a few "captains of industry" without any increase in either productive investment or output.

Though Yeltsin's privatization program has so far affected mainly small and medium-sized enterprises, its re-

Notes on work in progress

Where is Russia going?

sults are already clear: 1) In most cases its beneficiaries are the apparatchiks of old, as seen in how 80% of joint-stock companies are owned by former officials of the KGB, and 2) privatization has resulted in a burst of trade and speculative profiteering without adding anything of real value to the economy.

In a word, to the extent that Russia is moving toward a "market economy," it is in the form of speculative trade and financial swindling grafted onto a pre-existing state-capitalist structure.

CONTEXT OF THE WORLD MARKET

It would be easy to view these developments as a peculiarity of Russia's effort to move toward a "market economy." However, just as the rise of totalitarianism in the

from production. They think they can still go merrily on with their computerized stock market, false super-profiteering through mergers, playing the margins, and alternating ownerships from corporations to 'private entrepreneurs.' She added, "What the ideologues...have to recognize is this: once they have 'uncoupled' industrial production from their whole economy, and capital from investment in production, reducing capital investment to money alone, they are left with what they supposedly rejected—monetarism."⁴

THE STATIST BASIS OF 'FREE MARKET' RESTRUCTURING

After 1992 Yeltsin pursued a classic monetarist policy. Better known as "shock therapy," it centered on a "tight money" policy that limited subsidies to state enterprises to force them to compete directly with the world market. Yet the effort to coax Russia toward a "free market" through this "sink or swim" approach ran into an insurmountable obstacle, as it risked driving a huge number of enterprises into bankruptcy. The International Monetary Fund admits that if the Russian government met its fiscal targets, 40% of industrial plants would be forced to close down. The resulting unemployment and breakdown in production could threaten the regime's very existence.

In light of this, many managers of industry and agriculture are resisting a full-scale plunge toward the "free market." They want the state to play a larger role by continuing to prop up unprofitable state enterprises. Since the Dec. 12 elections, which showed little popular support for his policies, Yeltsin has moved closer to this group, leading to the resignation from his cabinet of advocates of instant "shock therapy."

Yet it isn't just advocates of a slower pace of reform who want a stronger state. That is just as true of advocates of a more rapid approach. Both say a stronger state is needed in order to guard against the instability and outright revolt which will accompany further economic austerity.⁵

Despite the illusions of Western analysts, the ruling factions all realize that integrating Russia into the lawless laws of the world market requires brute force—the brute force of armed state power. They are simply fighting amongst themselves over who will control the commanding heights of state power in this period of "economic reform." Far from leading to a dissolution of monopolization and statism, the drive to the "free market" reinvents their consolidation.

This too is rooted in the global nature of state-capitalism. As Dunayevskaya wrote in her analysis of Andropov's ascendancy in 1982: "Ever since the Depression caused the total collapse of private capitalism, the truth is that the only way capitalism could save itself...was to bow to the State Plan. It isn't Plan, Plan, Plan, but State, State, State that marked the new, the ultimate stage of capitalism. By whatever name it went...state intervention was here to stay."⁶

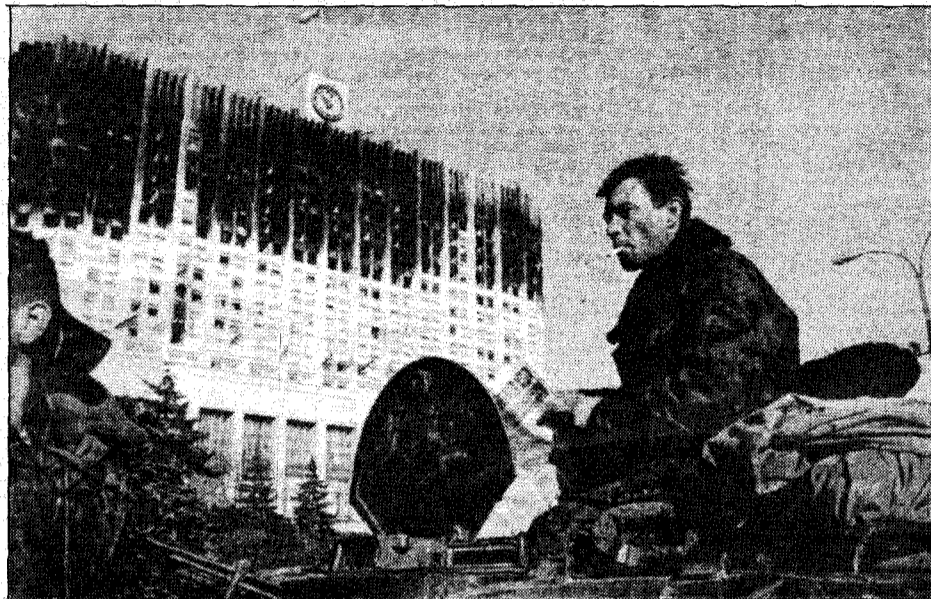
THE SEARCH FOR AN IRON HAND

The problem facing the Russian rulers is that just when they need a stronger state, they are bereft of a force which would marshal the powers of the state around the task of implementing economic austerity. This flows from a most significant result of the events of 1991—the collapse of the Communist Party.

This collapse has left a vacuum in power relations which the rulers are anxious to fill. It explains Yeltsin's growing reliance on the military, graphically demonstrated in October, when after some initial hesitation the military came to Yeltsin's support by crushing the Rutskoi-Khasbulatov-led parliamentary opposition. Soon afterwards, the military's growing power was seen in the announcement of a "new military doctrine" proclaiming the "right" of Russian troops to intervene in conflicts in the countries of the former Soviet Union and in Yeltsin's decision to shelve efforts to dismantle Russia's massive military-industrial complex.

These and other events may suggest that the military is stepping in to supply the unifying role formerly held by the Party. Yet this seems somewhat unlikely, since the military is deeply fragmented and faces grave internal problems of its own. However, this unstable situa-

(continued on page 10)



Russian tanks outside gutted parliament, 1993.

Stalin period was not just a "Russian question" but an integral part of a new world stage of state-capitalism, so the crisis afflicting Russia in the 1990s cannot be fully grasped outside its world context.

We especially have to keep in mind the new situation ushered in with the 1974-75 world economic recession, which manifested a steep decline in capitalism's rate of profit. Faced with a severe crisis in accumulation, capitalism embarked upon a new stage of economic restructuring and austerity. This was reflected in the attempt to force down wages and living conditions and the drive to restructure capitalism according to the dictates of high-tech production.

While this two-decade-long process has produced many economic changes, it has not succeeded in extricating capitalism from its underlying problem: the tendency of the rate of profit to decline. As a result, capital has tended to migrate to areas outside the productive sphere where the short-term rates of profit have tended to be higher—i.e., speculative capital, financial markets, corporate buyouts, etc. This situation, wherein capital becomes uncoupled from real investment by being reduced to a purely monetary transaction, is an integral part of the changed world economy since 1974-75.

The fact that in Russia "economic transactions are increasingly governed by the pursuit of profit through trade, [leaving] production more or less unchanged," may be an extreme case, given the exigencies of transforming a "planned" economy into a "market economy."³ But it is hardly unique to Russia; it is expressive of the crisis afflicting state-capitalism on a world scale.

Raya Dunayevskaya pinpointed the nature of this crisis in 1986: "Today's profit-hungry capitalists, both private and state, think they can...uncouple' employment

3. See Michael Burawoy and Pavel Krotov, "The Economic Basis of Russia's Political Crisis" in *New Left Review*, 198 (1993). While the authors show that such "maximization of profit through trade...grafts itself onto preexisting systems of production without necessarily altering them," they tie this to a specious notion that Russia is entering a stage of "merchant capital" comparable to what Europe experienced in the 16th and 17th centuries. This flows from their failure to grasp the category of state-capitalism, as seen in their calling Russia "state-socialist," "pre-capitalist" and even "feudal."

Read more on Russia, counter-revolution and state-capitalism

Marxism and Freedom

by Raya Dunayevskaya

"Once the Russian people, 'to a man,' did not run the economy and the state; once the German Revolution too was defeated; once world capitalism regained its breath [after World War I] and the vortex of the world market had full sway, the logic of the Russian development was startling, unforeseen, but inevitable. The Revolution then found the really serious counter-revolution inside itself. Stalin was the perfect representative of that counter-revolution..."

To order, see literature ad on page 7.

1. As Zhirinovskiy stated in an interview last year, "Hitler came to power when the conditions in Germany were like they are now in Russia. The conditions for someone ultra-right to come to power now are here."

2. Space considerations prevent us from taking up events in Kazakhstan, Belarus and Ukraine, where the economic crisis is even more severe than Russia's. However, insofar as the old Stalinist nomenklatura likewise remains in power in those countries, this analysis largely applies to those lands as well.

4. See Raya Dunayevskaya, "Capitalist Production/Alienated Labor: This Nuclear World and its Political Crises" in *The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism* (Chicago: News and Letters, 1991), pp. 149-50.

5. A typical expression of this is Vladimir Sungorkin's recent statement in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*: "Russia is doomed to go through an era of authoritarianism if it wants to remain a great power...only under the shadow of a state of emergency and a tougher government will it be possible to stabilize inflation."

6. See Dunayevskaya's "Andropov's Ascendancy Reflects Final Stage of State-Capitalist Degeneracy" in *The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism*, pp. 145-6.

MORE DIALOGUE ON 'OUR UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION'

I may be optimistic, but I suspect that it's the beginning of the end of Yeltsin, whom I had expected to emerge as a dictator; whether it is sanguine to hope that he can't, when the probable alternative is the more openly fascist Zhirinovskiy, is of course debatable. Russians are still being quoted as saying they were inspired by his courage when they saw him standing on the tanks defying the Stalinist coup—while they say they have since become disillusioned. But it can't be long before they begin to ask questions about that coup: Why was Gorbachev seized the first day and not Yeltsin? Why were the coup tanks and soldiers without ammunition? Was Yeltsin told of this in advance?

One way or another—even allowing for the continued existence of Stalinism in China, Cuba and elsewhere, and the West's remarkable selectivity in apparently seeing Chinese Communists as allies of democracy—it opens up an entirely new political situation, as for years socialists have been handicapped by the fact that one of the vilest capitalist regimes in the world used verbiage culled from socialist theory.

Laurens Otter
England

* * *

The Social and Political Research Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences presented a study in mid-December concerning some aspects of Zhirinovskiy's party social background. The study is based on the social composition of the party's congress last April. Correcting the general assertion that it is the marginal groups which are the main support of the Liberal Democratic Party the study shows it is composed by 40% of clerks and technical employees, 30% of scientists, students, businessmen and industrial managers and 10% of workers. More than two-thirds of the congress delegates had a partial or completed university education. Ninety percent were men. One-half of them were between 30 and 50 years of age. According to the study the key role of Zhirinovskiy's electoral success was played by the "national idea."

Stephen Steiger
Prague

* * *

Guess who was in China at the same moment Clinton was toasting Yeltsin in Moscow? Richard Nixon. And guess who flew to China direct from Russia as soon as Clinton's visit to Moscow was over? Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen. Right before that trip Bentsen publicly disputed the new Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, for suggesting that Russia should go a little softer on shock therapy. While in Beijing, he made

a big play about how important China—and Indonesia—are for new American corporate investment.

It suggests to me that China and the Pacific rim are more important in the eyes of U.S. policy-makers at this point than Russia—precisely because unlike Russia at this moment, they have "stable" dictatorial regimes which can "protect" American investments.

Observer
Chicago

* * *

When I read the news about all the graft and corruption running rampant among the new "aparatchnik businessmen" in Russia, I keep thinking of how the situation is even worse in China. Because the economy is "booming" there, the U.S. press still wants to pretend it is some sort of utopia.

Chinese exile
New York

* * *

There may be no "fundamental" difference between Yeltsin and Zhirinovskiy, but making no difference between the two reminds me of the totally—and intentionally—wrong position of the Comintern in the 1930s that did not want to differentiate between fascists and "social fascists"—turning Social Democrats into Nazis. This is of serious consequence not only in "practical" politics.

Correspondent
Czech Republic

WHEN THE GROUND SHOOK LOS ANGELES



The Jan. 17 earthquake released some stress along geologic fault lines, but it has intensified the stress along social fault lines of Los Angeles. L.A.'s "non-earthquake homeless" are being turned away from the shelters for the victims of the earthquake. Thousands in working-class Latino neighborhoods are sleeping in the street, because their buildings haven't been inspected and are unsafe. The Latino population is especially hard hit, yet at most shelters the staff only speaks English to them.

When thousands lined up in front of the federal emergency offices, they were turned away by the National Guard. A few who did get in were told to come back in a few weeks.

Cyrus Noveen
Los Angeles

IN MEMORIAM: VIRGIL A. VOGEL

Virgil J. Vogel, an expert on American Indian history and life-long socialist, died at his home in Northbrook, Ill. on Monday, Jan. 10, at the age of 75. Vogel obtained a doctorate in American history from the University of Chicago and was a retired professor of history at Truman College. He was the author of several highly regarded works on American Indian history, including *The Indian in American History*, a pamphlet; *American Indian Medicine*, a classic work which was republished in paperback in 1990 by the University of Oklahoma Press; *This Country Was Ours*, one of the most respected books on American Indian history, and several other works on Indian names for cities and other geographical features.

While obituaries for Vogel of several paragraphs in length appeared in both *The New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*, neither paper mentioned that in the early to mid 1940s Virgil Vogel was National Chair of the Young People's Socialist League, youth affiliate of the Socialist Party, or that he was a member of the Socialist Party for most of his life. In its Jan. 12 obituary, the *Chicago Tribune* did state that, "In 1970 Prof. Vogel became part of a group of Chicagoans who revitalized" the Charles H. Kerr Co., a publishing house that "had a long history of publishing radical and dissident books"; nevertheless, the *Tribune* did not mention that Vogel himself was well-known in left political circles as an active and committed demo-

cratic socialist.

An indication of Vogel's perspective on American Indian history can be gleaned from a quotation from his 1968 pamphlet, *The Indian in American History*. Vogel maintained that "historians have used four principal methods to create or perpetuate false impressions of aboriginal Americans, namely: obliteration, defamation, disembodiment, and disparagement." After detailing the shocking racist and genocidal attitudes towards American Indians in textbooks written for American schools, Vogel points out that, "These historians are gone, but their influence is not. Their crude racism has gone out of fashion, but derogation of Indian character continues." This was written in 1968; today, we have "politically correct" textbooks devoid of overt racism. But as Virgil Vogel no doubt knew, the horrible situation of Native Americans has scarcely changed since then, and "politically correct" textbooks will do little to improve that situation. However, thanks in part to Vogel's work, a few books have recently been published that faithfully document and condemn the genocidal practices that continue today. Most importantly, Vogel's pamphlet deals at length with the remarkable contribution of American Indians to American and world culture, and contains an excellent bibliography on this topic.

All those who seek a better world have lost a socialist friend and a champion of oppressed people.

—Marilyn Nissim-Sabat

Readers' Views

The earthquake which hit Los Angeles on Jan. 17 hit many middle-class whites living in the suburbs. Nature's ruthlessness, or what some would call an "act of God," brings everybody down to earth regardless of how much money one has, and gives certain people a shock of recognition that we are, after all, only human—common people in need of food, water and shelter from the basic elements. Nature with its power of life and death is beyond capitalist scientific control. Money cannot control the wind, the rain, the natural sunlight. Capitalist science can only deform it for profit.

As a Marxist-Humanist, for myself, Nature also includes Human Nature, and the most natural act of an oppressed people is the act of rebellion. That is what the world witnessed in April 1992, and then Los Angeles burned from something very natural—the rage of a people. We don't need an earthquake to experience a storm coming of earth-shaking proportions.

Gene Ford
Los Angeles

DEMAND MORE AIDS FUNDING

The City-County Health Department of Oklahoma County has closed down the treatment clinic that served HIV-infected patients in Oklahoma City and rural towns within 90 miles. They terminated the \$263,000 Ryan White grant that they couldn't get qualified medical personnel to staff the clinic, but several health officials said that John Harkness, an infectious disease specialist with the University of Oklahoma Health Center, and several other local physicians and dentists frequently donated time to work with patients. Many think the clinic was closed precisely when these people needed more care, not less, because it was just a lot of trouble to operate it.

Angry
Oklahoma



CHIAPAS: VISAGE OF THE OTHER MEXICO

What is new for us in the Chiapas revolt is the spontaneity of the rebellion, which is reflected in the fact that the media and the Mexican "authorities" still are looking for the "vanguard" leaders (blonde hair, green eyes?) of the rebellion. In other words, they are looking for outsiders who "should be" leading the indigenous movement. The rulers are convinced that the peasant masses do not and cannot think for themselves. Contrary to the characteristics of the Latin American guerrillas of the '60s and '70s, the indigenous self-organization in Chiapas does not follow a vanguard party, it is spontaneous. This spontaneity of the rebels put the Mexican state, with all its repressive apparatus, on the spot, provoking a cabinet crisis and therefore showing the illusion of an image, the political, economic and social stability of Mexico.

Latin American activist
New York

* * *

There is no doubt that the peasants of Chiapas are about to make history. They are the "wretched of the earth" that the bourgeoisie dominates. As the Chiapas governor said in referring to the indigenous rebels, "They are foreigners, strangers. What are their ideas? Where do they come from?" The indigenous peasants, the "Zapatistas," are the Other in Mexico.

Sin Mas
Dominican Republic

* * *

I've been interested for a long time in indigenous and Native American issues, and the question of how can there be a dialogue between the indigenous movement and Marxist philosophy. What is happening in Chiapas is very revolution-

ary, and it's significant that it's happening at the same time that we see the rise of fascism in the world. The psychology of fascism involves fetishizing a "pure" past, while it projects a future without change in property or social relations. The movement in Chiapas is looking to its own Mayan history, but not as a fixation with a past that was; they very much understand their situation in the present context. We need to find new ways to theorize these new developments and open up the dialogue between indigenous movements and Marxist-Humanism.

Student
California



BOSNIA'S FIGHT FOR FREEDOM CONTINUES

In spite of repeated attacks on its personnel, of lack of power supplies, fuel and paper, the Sarajevo daily *Oslobodjenje* is defying the twenty-month siege and is still publishing daily. For its multicultural editorial policy, which is a mirror of both the pre-war Bosnia-Herzegovina atmosphere and the Muslim-Croatian-Serbian composition of the editorial staff, it has just been awarded the Andrei Sakharov Prize. The daily, which celebrated its 50th anniversary last August, wants to use the prize money to supply the fuel needed for its electric generators and to buy printing paper. *Oslobodjenje* may live!

Observer
East Europe

* * *

It is amazing that the Bosnians have been able to hold out this long, given the Serb-Croat alliance against them and the strangulation of the arms embargo. It is a testament to the nobility of the idea for which the Bosnians are fighting. Why there is resistance to supporting their just military struggle in so-called "progressive" circles is beyond me.

Solidarity activist
Chicago

* * *

I have known your group for some time, but the thing that has most impressed me about News and Letters Committees over the past year has been your insistent and consistent work around support for the Bosnia struggle. You took a position when few others in the Left were willing to do so and have kept it at the top of your agenda.

J.M.
Chicago

* * *

We have several new buttons calling for peace in Bosnia and the Mideast. One other thing that speaks for itself: "Ethnic cleansing" must stop!

Artists for Mideast Peace
144 Moody St.
Waltham, Mass. 02154

Editor's note: Buttons can be ordered from Artists for Mideast Peace for \$1 each, plus 50¢ postage.

THE ITALIAN SCENE

So far the working class has only enjoyed seeing the debacle of the Italian ruling class, but they realize power is still firmly in the hands of the capitalist class and the only common key word—in the light of the mass sackings—is "work for all of us with less pay." Even this key word has no mass support. According to the bourgeois propaganda the elections will solve all problems—unemployment, public debt, inflation, corruption, etc.

Correspondent
Italy

Chicago readers, come to
Marx and Multiculturalism
A new series of six classes at the New World Resource Center. Call (312) 348-3370 for readings and more information.

DIALOGUE ON 'OUR UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION'

What is striking about the responses to Dunayevskaya's 1976 speech "On the Uniqueness of Marxist-Humanism" which you published in the November issue is how each finds her and his special concerns being addressed. These responses reflect the encompassing character of Raya's 1976 speech. I'm especially pleased by the December issue's reprinting of her letter about Maurice Merleau-Ponty. It is my guess that the history of philosophy will deal more kindly with him than Sartre, about whom a growing disillusionment is already taking place.

Editor
New England

* * *

The content of "Exploring the original contribution of Marxist-Humanism" from the December issue is very groundbreaking. In the three articles, Terry Moon, Gene Ford and F. Shelley apply Marxist-Humanist theory to three issues: women's liberation, Black/Los Angeles rebellion and Frantz Fanon/spontaneous national revolutionary movements. I can't really say all of Dunayevskaya's writings are clear, but these articles are a good application of the theory to the particular. They help to create the beginning of a "clearly articulated alternative to capitalism," as so pointedly mentioned by John Alan's concluding sentence in "Clinton Distorts M.L. King Legacy" in the same issue.

Subscriber
North Carolina

* * *

There is much in Dunayevskaya's 1976 speech which is unclear to me. She says Marxist-Humanism said a new beginning must be made from Hegel's concept of Absolute Idea. This sounds like an idealist digression; didn't Marx say that all beginnings come from material reality? I would like to see more discussion on this.

Subscriber
Illinois

* * *

The discussion about the need for a "philosophic nucleus" in Dunayevskaya's 1976 essay is about as tall an order as one can imagine. Just

think of having to "present the whole of philosophy and Marxist-Humanism" every time you talk to someone! Or suppose you had to consult the "whole of philosophy" every time a concrete situation presents itself. You would surely have to "be the philosophy and the philosopher." Can it be done? While it is inspiring to note the originality of Dunayevskaya's contributions, one wonders why, given the caliber of News and Letters Committees members, the problem of a philosophic nucleus persists.

David M.
San Francisco



**U.S. LABOR
BATTLES
CAPITAL**

I liked what I heard an auto worker in Flint say after the NAFTA agreement was passed. He said American unions should reach out to the Mexican workers and that we should organize a "labor union of North America." He also said it's a sad state of affairs when somebody like Ross Perot could be taken as a spokesman for the working people. It sure is.

Unemployed worker
Chicago

* * *

I've just recently become unemployed and some of the things I've read in Chapter I of Marx's Capital have come alive for me. Capital is the death of itself because it takes out the human being—even in something like applying for unemployment. Now an automatic telephone answers and dictates questions and even determines how and when you answer them!

Learning fast
New York

* * *

Today capitalists themselves know that they can't afford to pay managers to just structure production while an

army of workers does only "what they are told." They want the workers to "own" the "process." The new management style says it wants to "empower" workers to make use of their heads as well as their hands. This "empowerment," like earlier changes in the production process, is driven by capitalism's need to extract more labor from workers. Workers are empowered only to more perfectly personify capitalism. The new management style is aimed at convincing people that there is no alternative to capitalism's irrationality.

Skeptical
Chicago

* * *

Please let all your readers know that before they buy their next bag of Domino, GW or Redpath sugar, they should remember that the British conglomerate, Tate & Lyle (T&L), owns those sugar companies and is an international sugar of labor and the environment. Its production sites are dirty and dangerous for workers and the community alike. At the A.E. Staley Manufacturing plant in Decatur, a T&L subsidiary, T&L is trying to break our union. It is fighting our very right to exist. It's why we are calling for an international boycott of all T&L products. Ask your readers to help us spread the word.

Staley workers, AIW Local 837
Decatur, Ill.

* * *

I sold copies of N&L at the labor rallies for Alta Bates Hospital workers on the basis of the stories from miners, Staley, and B.A. Lastelle's column. People really do want to know what's going on in others' struggles.

Jim M.
Berkeley, Cal.

OUR READERS RESPOND

The choice of material in your paper is always thought-provoking. You obviously believe in work among the working class and the masses, yet are not oblivious to the importance that scholarship can bring to a revolutionary struggle. This is evident in your December 1993 paper. The article on bell hooks and the

Marx conference in Chicago are indicative of your awareness of this as an important forum for debate and discourse. Also, our views on Yeltsin converge completely; very few people are thinking the Russian situation through.

D.A.
North Carolina

* * *

As 1994 begins the workers and poor people calling themselves the Zapatista National Liberation Front have started an insurrection against the status quo in Mexico. How will the Mexican elite react? I know N&L from its page two coverage of women's struggles to its last page of international events will tell me where the struggle is at. Please renew my sub for two more years.

Longtime reader
Reseda, Cal.

* * *

As a Latvian American, I follow closely events in the Baltic countries as well as in Russia and Eastern Europe. I am particularly impressed with your concern about the question you call "what happens after." Freedom is a very complicated concept.

Graduate Student
Virginia

* * *

We have been receiving N&L and our students have benefited from it. Our periodicals budget is now zero minus—that is, far from getting new ones, we are being forced to cancel subscriptions. To support alternative views we would be very grateful if you could provide us with a complimentary sub. It is a sad era when the State of California must beg for dissenting journals but we have arrived at that time. Please help us, if you can.

Cal State University Library
Sacramento

Editor's note: We established some time ago a "donors fund" out of which we are able to send paid gift subs to libraries, prisoners, international readers who cannot send funds and others who want—but otherwise could not pay for—a sub. Can you make a contribution to help us expand our readership this way?

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS FROM NEWS & LETTERS

The following is a select list of publication available from News & Letters. A full list of our publications is available in our "Marxist-Humanist Literature Catalogue," available from N&L for 50¢.

—BOOKS—

by Raya Dunayevskaya

- Marxism and Freedom ...from 1776 until today**
1989 edition. New introduction by author
.....\$17.50 per copy
- Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao**
1989 edition. New introduction by author
.....\$14.95 per copy
- Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution**
1991 edition. New introduction by author. Forward by Adrienne Rich.
.....\$12.95 per copy
- Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future**
.....\$15.95 per copy
- The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism: selected writings.**
.....\$8.50 per copy
- The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism: Two Historic-Philosophic Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya.**
"Presentation on Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy of June 1, 1987," and 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes."
.....\$3.00 paperback, \$10.00 hardcover
- Indignant Heart:**
A Black Worker's Journal
1989 edition includes Afterword by Raya Dunayevskaya, "Charles Denby 1907-83"
by Charles Denby.....\$14.95 per copy

—PAMPHLETS—

- American Civilization on Trial, Black Masses as Vanguard**
Statement of the National Editorial Board. Includes "A 1980s View of the Two-Way Road Between the U.S. and Africa," by Raya Dunayevskaya, and "Black Caucuses in the Unions"
by Charles Denby.....\$2 per copy
- Bosnia-Herzegovina: Achilles Heel of Western "Civilization"**
.....\$1 per copy
- Marx's Capital and Today's Global Crisis**
Contains introduction, "Today's Epigones Who Try to Truncate Marx's Capital," and Chapters Five through Eight of *Marxism and Freedom*
by Raya Dunayevskaya\$2 per copy
- The Coal Miners' General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.**
by Andy Phillips and Raya Dunayevskaya\$2 per copy
- 25 Years of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S. A History of Worldwide Revolutionary Developments**
by Raya Dunayevskaya\$1.50 per copy
- The Myriad Global Crises of the 1980s and the Nuclear World Since World War II**
Includes "Introduction/Overview—Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of Its World Development," and "Retrospective/Perspective: Thirty Years of News & Letters."
by Raya Dunayevskaya\$2 per copy

- Theory and Practice, by Rosa Luxemburg**
First English translation.....\$2 per copy
- Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions**
by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$1.25 per copy
- Frantz Fanon, Soweto and American Black Thought**
by Lou Turner and John Alan.....\$3 per copy
- Selections from Raya Dunayevskaya's Writings on the Middle East**
.....\$2.50 per copy
- Working Women for Freedom**
by Angela Terrano, Marie Dignan and Mary Holmes\$1 per copy
- Dos ensayos por Raya Dunayevskaya**
.....\$2 per copy
- Constitution of News & Letters Committees**
.....29¢ postage

—ARCHIVES—

- The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of Its World Development**
A 15,000-page microfilm collection on 8 reels available from Wayne State U., Detroit, Mich.\$160
- Guide to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of Its World Development.**
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Editorial

Clinton, C.I.A. bolster military tyranny in Haiti

In early January, a remark by Bill Clinton about Haiti was greeted by shouts of glee and laughter from that country's military-gangster-capitalist rulers. When asked about exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's future, Clinton said: "I think his own prospects are clouded." His seemingly offhand but very calculated words suggested that the U.S. has given up even the pretense of helping to bring Aristide back. Aristide, a leftist proponent of liberation theology elected on a platform of radical social and economic change, was overthrown by the military in 1991 after less than a year in office.

With his statement, Clinton returned to the old Bush policy: 1) on and off again economic sanctions, enough to wound but not to topple the military; 2) pressure on Aristide to form a coalition government with these assassins and oppressors; 3) refusal to give Haitian boat people political asylum while granting it to Cuban boat people. Clinton, elected on promises of reversing these policies, had backtracked on the asylum issue even before taking office. Clinton, a liberal who readily compromises with the most reactionary forces in the U.S., wants Aristide to do the same with the out-and-out fascist types from the Haitian military.

Last fall, in the middle of heightened economic sanctions and even the dispatch of some U.S. military observers to Haiti, Clinton immediately retreated after military-organized thugs made some threatening gestures in the Port-au-Prince harbor. During those same weeks, the CIA leaked to the media a report branding Aristide as "mentally unstable."

The New York Times soon revealed that the very source of this "data" was the Haitian military, probably including even the present ruler, Raoul Cédras. It seemed that Cedras and other top officers were members of SIN, a shadowy Haitian intelligence service created in 1986 by the CIA. During the late 1980s, SIN received up to \$1 million per year from the CIA at a time when Congress had voted to cut off all aid to the Haitian military. Instead of fighting drugs, its stated purpose according to the CIA, SIN officers persecuted, tortured, and killed Aristide supporters and other leftists.

So what did Clinton do after the CIA's slander of Aristide and the revelations about SIN? He certainly didn't fire anyone at the CIA. Instead, he moved closer to their position once the slander got picked up by powerful reactionary politicians such as Bob Dole. Clinton began hinting that Aristide's businessman prime minister, Robert Malval, appointed under U.S. pressure to appease the military, would make a better leader than Aristide. As a Haitian politician told the New York Times (12/20/93): "His invitations and meetings around Washington had every appearance of a coup d'etat in the making." That having failed, the plan now seems to be to so wear down Aristide and his supporters that they are willing to accept some type of figleaf of democracy while the military and its henchmen remain in power.

That is why Aristide, not the military, comes in nowadays for the most criticism from Washington. That is why there was dead silence on January 15 when yet another Clinton deadline for restoring Aristide to power

passed by. That is why there was also silence when two weeks earlier neo-Duvalierist gangs burned down hundreds of homes in the sprawling Port-au-Prince slum Cite Soleil (Sun City). The military-backed terrorists act-

Women's conference

(continued from page 2)

history and fiction meet."

Another workshop discussed a new anthology, *Theorizing Black Feminisms*, involving women who created it. They wanted to emphasize the collection's roots in the 1970 anthology, *The Black Woman*, edited by Toni Cade Bambara. Beverly Guy-Sheftall said that "African-American women have been the most visionary in feminist theory. It is not an alien discourse to us." Evelyn Barbee, a nurse anthropologist, stated, "We need more empirical data on Black women because most studies on women are about white women.... There is a need to talk about domestic violence against Black women and to discuss this with young men."

Black lesbian feminists conducted a workshop the last day of the conference. Marva Nelson stated that Black lesbians in academia are rendered invisible, while others discussed the need to include Black lesbian writers' works in the Black studies curriculum, feminist studies, and discussions in the community.

"Black Women Historical Figures and Interpretation" revealed how Black women's narratives become misinterpreted. Nell Painter spoke about her forthcoming *Sojourner Truth: A Life and A Symbol*. She discovered that the words attributed to Truth and most quoted by feminists, "Ain't I a woman," were invented by the white woman abolitionist, Frances Dana Gage, who edited the narrative Truth had carefully dictated so her ideas could find a wider audience.

While the L.A. Rebellion was only discussed in one workshop, the main debate was over the conference's resolution to Clinton. Women demanded issues be included from welfare rights to criticism of Black woman Senator Carol Moseley-Braun's support of the crime bill, to Clinton's health care plan, to issues of justice, public education, domestic violence, and lesbian and gay rights.

Finally, in her keynote speech, Angela Davis conveyed the impression that she had the answers to the contradictions that appeared at the conference. She got standing ovations. The contradictions she ignored, however, were those that have characterized the history of her own political life, especially in the wake of the collapse of Communism. Instead, she spoke of the need to support Cuba, without mentioning what happened after the Cuban revolution, especially regarding the conditions of women today. Although she still identifies herself as a socialist, what I want to know is, what kind of socialism is needed for total freedom?

What was exciting was that we were able to meet, during those three days, almost every Black woman writer we have ever read. The question we went away with was: could this conference be a new beginning?

Black/Red View

by John Alan

The country is now going through an ideological panic over a crime wave created by politicians who want to show that they're better crime fighters than their opponents. The Senate has passed a crime bill making five more crimes punishable by death and has approved the hiring of 100,000 policemen and the building of new prisons without any serious opposition. Mario Cuomo, the liberal governor of New York, and Pete Wilson, the ultra-conservative governor of California, have called special sessions of their legislatures to consider new laws to combat crime. Jesse Jackson, with the help of the African-American political leadership, held a summit conference in Washington D.C. to organize a crusade to make African Americans confront the "internal causes" of crime in the Black communities.

While it may be obvious that there is no sudden jump in the magnitude of crime, there is widespread support among the white middle class for more prisons and longer sentences for convicted felons. As one California assemblyman put it: "write crime across a bill and it will become law."

Andrew Hacker, the white sociologist, tells us in his book *Two Nations* that when white America thinks about violent crime they think about "Black crime" and not white felons. He goes on to say Black crime "...crops up in every poll, and has become a conversational staple. Still, most white Americans do not live in or near areas where violence stalks the streets... nor does a significant share of taxes paid by white householders support black families on welfare or out-of-wedlock children."

He reveals that the average Black criminal standard of living does not exceed that of the unemployed or underemployed law-abiding Black worker in the inner cities, but he says nothing serious about the interrelationship of crime, poverty, and capitalism.

Last fall Clinton gave a pious speech in Memphis about Black crime and the general amorality of Black youth. That speech has taken on a definitive, concrete, political meaning over the last few months. It is now clear that Clinton used it to set into place his national agenda to build more prisons and give the judiciary and the police greater power to quell social unrest, as his administration pursues a policy of turning the welfare sys-

Panic over 'crime'

tem into a severe form of humiliation and punishment for poor people.

A political casualty of the president's speech was the Black leadership. Few of these Black leaders have had the moral courage to counter Clinton's clap-trap by telling about the more than two decades of poverty and permanent unemployment that ravaged and dehumanized life in the inner cities by economic forces beyond the control of African Americans. Instead we find that those at Jackson's summit believe they can regenerate the morals of the Black community by having the churches take over the raising of 100,000 Black youth. This proposal is a capitulation to Clinton's concept of the necessity to carry on an internal moral crusade to end the social crisis in the Black community.

However, both Clinton and Jackson understand that there has to be some kind of an objective movement toward resolving the crisis. Jackson apparently believes that can be done politically through the congressional Black Caucus. Clinton believes it can be done economically by the establishment of "empowerment zones," that is, giving tax breaks to businesses that move to the Black community, a form of trickle-down economy.

Both of these concepts avoid the self-emancipatory activity of African-American masses. This kind of elitism is a major, ongoing, historic problem of the Afro-American freedom struggles. This problem arose passionately at Jackson's summit meeting during the dispute over rap. The Black middle class, like the white middle class, is disturbed by the vulgarity, violence, and negative content of rap. But rap is not an abstract nothing: it speaks about the brutal reality and dehumanization of life in the Black ghettos of this country. In its own way, rap puts American civilization on trial because it implies that there is an alternative to this brutality.

There is a present danger that the historic social evils of capitalism, crime, and poverty, which baffled the empirical thinking of the classical political economists, sending them to find the roots of crime and poverty in the amorality of the British working class, is now being turned into a thinly disguised form of American racism which links together Black crime, welfare, and illegal aliens as causes of the present recession. This we must expose and vigorously oppose.

ed after one of their leaders got the fate he deserved from the local population. The Duvalierists are demanding that the residents of Cite Soleil, a bastion of Aristide support, change the name of their community back to Cite Simone, the name forced on it during the Duvalier days (Simone was Francois Duvalier's wife).

The Haitian masses have long had a clearer view of what Washington is doing than that usually presented in the U.S. media. As a 26-year-old resident of a fishing village asked the *New York Times*: "Why hasn't Washington ever wanted a full embargo here? They keep doing just enough to crush the people while the army just keeps getting richer." A business man in the capital added: "You get the feeling that the United States is mocking us. Their will has been the law in this region for as long as anyone can remember, and yet they pretend to be powerless here. You have to ask yourself, 'Do they really want Aristide to come back?'"

So far, Aristide has refused to accept a rotten Clinton-type compromise, but he has also spared Clinton any direct public criticism. At a January 15 Miami gathering of Haitian leaders convened by Aristide and to which under U.S. pressure even members of the military were invited (they didn't show), those present voted to hold firm. They even hinted they might be ready to attack Clinton when they voted to abrogate Haiti's treaty with the U.S. allowing immediate repatriation of boat people, a resolution which prompted an angry walkout by the State Department representative.

Is it not time for those leaders fighting for Haitian liberation to have less dialogue with the Clinton administration and more with the Black American masses and other forces of liberation right within this country? More importantly, isn't it time for those in the U.S. who support Haitian liberation to find more forceful and creative ways of expressing that support?

Black World

(continued from page 1)

ciation) in Jamaica. By 1915 Garvey had immigrated to the U.S. and set about building the largest mass movement of people of African descent in modern history. At its pinnacle, 1919 to 1924, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party recognized in the organizational expanse of the Garvey movement a Black revolutionary nationalism that U.S. and British imperialism had to contend with.

For the Black revolutionary poet Claude McKay, it was precisely this international context of Black upheavals and the Russian Revolution which allowed him to put Garveyism into revolutionary perspective. Nothing did that more profoundly than his trip to Russia in 1922 to speak before the 4th Comintern Congress on the "Negro question" in America. In response to Lenin's appeal for studies on this question at this and the 2nd Congress, McKay wrote *The Negroes in America*, a study not discovered until 1977 in its original Russian edition.

By 1925, however, a year after Lenin's death, and only two years after his departure from Russia, McKay was one of the first to sound the alarm against the new barbarism on the horizon—Stalinism. In an anti-Stalin poem, "We Who Revolt," dedicated to Max Eastman, whom he had renewed acquaintances with in France in 1925 as Eastman was en route from Russia to New York with a copy of Lenin's "Will," McKay wrote:

*We shall see prancing tyrants in the place
Of shattered kings, an unctuous renegade
Planting his foot on a broken mace,
Posing a smith's hammer, a peasant's spade!
And we shall see the thoughts we loved so well
Twisted and torn and mangled into shapes
More hideous than the fancied forms of hell,
To strengthen the old tyranny of new-crowned apes.*

McKay's 1925 prescience coincided with the unctuous appearance of the now-hegemonic myth of the "Russian Lenin-Stalin way of putting the national question" that was propounded for the first time at the 5th Comintern Congress less than 6 months after Lenin's death.² Not only had Lenin criticized any notion of a so-called "Russian way," but his last ideological struggle was against Stalin's Great Russian chauvinism toward national minorities within the new Soviet Republics.

Speaking to that same 1924 Congress, Lovett Fort-Whiteman argued in the same vein McKay had two years earlier: "The ideas of Marx have spread only slowly among the Negroes, because the Socialists and even the Communists have not realized that the problem must be dealt with in a specialized way. The same newspapers do not satisfy the needs of the Negro worker which suit the needs of the white. The same speeches, propaganda, literature, will not suffice. The Negro feels no antagonism to Communism, but wants to know where it will satisfy his peculiar needs.... The Negroes are destined to be the most revolutionary class in America, but Communist propaganda among the Negroes is hampered by the lack of publicity carrying a special appeal."³

The dialectical fusing of Black and Red has proven more, not less, difficult to excavate with the collapse of Communism. But surely if we are to comprehend what makes this dialectic the vision of the future and not a truncated past, we will have to begin where Lenin left off, namely, fighting the narrow nationalism of our age's "unctuous renegades."

2. 5th Congress of the Communist International. *Abridged Report*, (London: Communist Party of Great Britain, 1924), p. 187.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 200-01.

For Black History Month: a rare essay by Richard Wright

*Editor's note: In commemoration of Black History Month, we are proud to make available—for the first time in over 50 years—a brief but insightful essay penned by Richard Wright. Wright, a towering figure in American literature, had published his masterpiece, *Native Son*, in 1940, and returned to Chicago in 1941 to research his history of Black Americans, *12 Million Black Voices*. Much of that research was conducted at Parkway Community House, an innovative center located in Chicago's south side "Black Belt." The director of Parkway, Horace Cayton, was then at work on the massive sociological study, *Black Metropolis*, which he co-authored with St. Clair Drake.*

The article printed here was written by Wright in April 1941 at Cayton's request; it was not published until 1943, when it appeared as a Parkway Community House brochure, entitled "The Negro and Parkway Community House." It has never been re-published until now.

At the time the essay was written, Wright was an increasingly disaffected member of the Communist Party (CP), and was engaged in discussions on the Party's relationship to Black Americans with Cayton, a fierce critic of CP policies. Wright's break with the CP, and his militant writings on American racism, drew the attention of Raya Dunayevskaya. "There is stirring in the Negro people in the U.S. today," she wrote, "a racial consciousness which has at present found its most extreme expression in the writings of Richard Wright." ("Negro Intellectuals in Dilemma," 1944)

The text of the essay printed here follows that of the Parkway Community House brochure as held in the Horace R. Cayton Papers, Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature, Chicago Public Library.

Richard Wright was a guest at Parkway Community House two years ago, just a few months after the House had opened its doors. Mr. Wright was here at that time to gather material for his book, *12 Million Black Voices*. Many of the things that he saw at the House became part of that book. Mr. Wright summed up what he saw in the city and at the House in this statement. It is with great pride that Parkway Community House publishes this statement by such an eminent and eloquent writer.

Horace R. Cayton Director
Parkway Community House, 5120 S. Parkway, Chicago

A great drama is transpiring in the tenements, on the pavements, and in the factories and shops of our industrial American cities, a drama of such violence, poignancy and magnitude, a drama involving the lives and destinies of so many millions, that it is incredible that so few people know of its existence and comprehend its fateful meaning.

The action of this drama is draped in the simple guise of every-day life, but the ultimate meaning of its action affects the lives of every person living within the boundaries of the continental United States. Curiously, there are no spectators witnessing this drama; there is no audience to condone or condemn it. Every American citizen is an active participant and helps to shape this drama toward the climax of hope or tragedy.

Though you may not realize it, you know the familiar externals of this drama. You see it every day; but its real heart and essence have been hidden from you. The human actors upon this industrial stage have not been introduced to you as human beings, but rather as mummies and clowns. In the past your stereotyped reaction to these actors have been either laughter or tears. Our newspapers, magazines, textbooks, churches, schools, advertisements, and radios have participated in an elaborately formed conspiracy to hide the real and painful truth of men struggling against great odds.

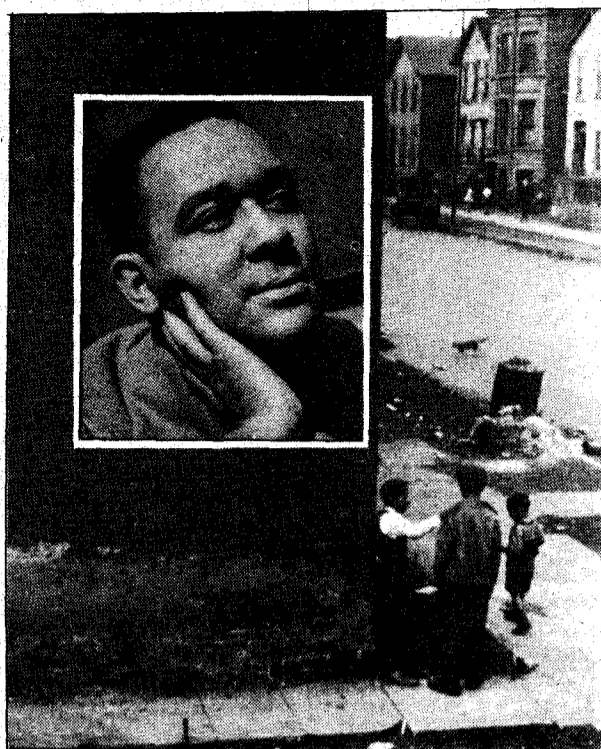
The protagonist of this drama is the migrant plantation Negro who came North, and the obstacle against which he pitted his strength is the total configuration of urban life. These Negroes are truly a form of the modern refugee who has become so numerous a spectacle in our world today; they are refugees from a Southern folk culture, from a static, warm, organic, simple way of life, where every man knew his fellow man; they are refugees fleeing the terrors of the plantation and seeking desperately to gain a footing in our highly complex and impersonal cities.

The story of the migrant Negroes' attempt at adjustment in the North is not a new story. It is but a phase of a story that is as old as man and man's effort to build civilization. It began with the first primitive peasant who fled the storms, the floods, the famines and tribulations of the hinterland, and walked trembling and afraid through the crooked streets of ancient cities. The bewildered, baffled faces of the migrant Negro in the Northern city is but a poignant note in a theme whose variations began long before history and whose pathetic chords will resound as long as the desperate folk of the farms are forced to seek refuge in the noisy cities.

Why, then, one might ask, if this story is old, if it is already so well known, should the question of the Negro migrants' adjustment be called to our special attention here and now? The answer is manifold: First, though the story of the trek of the peasant to the city is an old one, the Negro has been doomed to live and act his part in this story with a profound difference and under conditions most difficult. Second, whereas with other peoples the process of urban adjustment is long and drawn out, with the Negro it is concise, compact, volatile, brutal and compressed within a historical space of time readily accessible, partly through memory and reading. Third, strangely, the Negroes' story in our Northern cities, in an inverse sense, constitutes a highly enlarged reflection

of all attempts at urban adjustment, and therefore lends itself to fruitful study and examination.

HAD THE NEGRO migrant been allowed to participate fully and organically in what we so proudly term the "American Way of Life," the Negroes' role in this



Richard Wright (inset) and Chicago in the 1940s.

drama of the peasant in the city would have had no special significance. Like the Czech, the Lett, the Pole, the Finn, the Scot, the Dutch, the Welch, the Italian and many others who came to our shores, the migrant Negro would have landed in the midst of our cities with a feeling of being at home, would have learned our ways, would have obtained employment wherever jobs were open and would have advanced upward according to his ability. He would have sent his children to our schools and would have lived to see those children lift themselves gradually from the slums to the rooming house area, and finally to the spacious middle class suburbs of our American cities.

But the migrant Negro was not allowed to participate

Voices raised in support of Chiapas insurrection

Los Angeles—Over 500 loud and lively Mexicano and Chicano demonstrators filled the sidewalk opposite the Mexican consulate on Friday, Jan. 7, gathered to express solidarity with the uprising of the indigenous people of Chiapas, and to protest the Mexican government's brutal response-by-massacre.

All generations were present, from grandmothers to toddlers. In addition, a new generation of "Chicano and proud" youth, from MECHA chapters on various area campuses, participated in the chants: "Aqui, Alla, El pueblo vencera" ("Here, there, the people will win"); "Abajo el asesino Salinas" ("Down with Salinas the assassin"); "Que viva Zapata" and "Viva la libertad!"

"The people were hungry and fighting for their rights," one man, a Mexican worker, told *News & Letters*. "If I had been there, I would have joined them. And the people who were killed there—that could have been us."

That internationalist perspective expressed itself again the following Thursday, Jan. 13, at a meeting on the Chiapas uprising sponsored by the United Garment Workers Committee, an independent grouping of Latino workers who are attempting to organize in the highly exploitative garment industry.

A member of the Frente Mixteco-Zapoteco Binacional presented the historic and current situation in Chiapas, followed by discussion. "What does it mean when in Chiapas they raise a slogan of wanting democracy?" one woman asked. "The U.S. is supposedly the greatest democracy in the world, but we know what it's like—there's unemployment, there's racism, there's exploitation of workers. What people call 'democracy' is not the answer."

"I think they're talking about the need for a very different kind of democracy, a genuine democracy," one person responded to her.

"The best way we can support what is happening in Chiapas," a founder of the United Garment Workers Committee concluded, "is to be strong in the organizing work we do here."

—Michelle Landau

Salinas rule opposed

Mexico City—The rebellion in Chiapas has taken place in the context of a six-year administration, that of Carlos Salinas de Gortari, which we all knew to be fraudulent from the start. None of the erudite commentaries have pointed out the simple fact that the insurgents have been organizing themselves for this revolt roughly since the beginning of Salinas' term. The signing of the Free Trade Agreement was the moment at which they decided the time had come to move.

Some of the developments since Jan. 1 show that Mexico is a different place since 1988. In 1988 the opposition

in this process, and today, the so-called Black Belt areas of our Northern industrial cities like Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh and St. Louis constitute the black, undissolved lumps and clods in the quickening, life-giving fluid we call democracy.

Locked by tradition into restricted city areas, curtailed in his right to participate in industry and the professions, victimized in a racketeering housing situation, the migrant Negro and his children have, in some few instances, succeeded admirably, but in all too many other instances they have failed.

He failed because the odds against him were overwhelming and his folk mental equipment proved more of a detriment than a blessing. The expression of his failure is something that every American must be able to realize and interpret when he sees it. Here are some of the tell-tale social scars that betray the inescapable tragedy of the Negro in our industrial cities: Residential segregation; in some instances, 70,000 or more persons living to a square mile; the doubling up of families; the all-pervading habit of taking in lodgers and roomers to help pay exorbitant rentals, four or five persons living in one room; juvenile delinquency; family disorganization; adult crime; high adult death rates; high infant mortality rates; and the prevalence of diseases—tuberculosis, syphilis and insanity.... To make a long story short, in most Northern cities, like Chicago, for example, the Negro, because of adverse conditions, is failing to reproduce himself, is dying out, and if it were not for the constant additions to the population caused by immigration, he would truly die out in the course of years.

WITH THESE FACTS before our eyes and with this background drawn, the sensitive and alert members of the community can see at once the necessity for a more intensive and concentrated type of social service, administered by fearless and trained brains, equipped with a knowledge of society derived from empirical research.

Philanthropy cannot solve this problem. The money and time spent studying or seeking to control it is, in fact, but the first step toward comprehending a task whose magnitude but few realize and whose ultimate solution is destined to be historical.

The Parkway Community House is the first institution equipped with scientific knowledge of the urban situation among Negroes to attempt to control, probe, and disseminate facts as to the processes, meanings, causes and effects of urbanization. Its policies and activities should merit your most urgent attention and support.

Chicago, April 1941
—Richard Wright

was mainly focused in the cities, especially Mexico City, and did not spread to the campo. Today the situation is reversed; it began with the campesinos, and the support has spread throughout the country. Several marches of over 10,000 have taken place in Mexico City.

In 1988 Salinas made it clear that he would not budge an inch; in fact we thought at the time that he was becoming quite the fascist in response to the mass protests. Today he is clearly being forced to come up with a different response. People know about his offering of amnesty (ridiculous as it is in most respects) and his shakeup of his administration. People may not know that the government of Chiapas created a "confidential report" (obviously "leaked" by the federal government) called a "Political Diagnosis of the Conflict Zone" in which they admit Chiapas is living "the most dramatic situation of poverty in its entire history." It proposes a ten-point program to fix things up, including canceling the debt campesinos have with the state and "modifying the institutional relations of all governmental dependencies with the campesinos, creating a climate of respect for human dignity...." It appears that there may be something besides the use of brute force on the table, and at the same time we have to worry about the government convincing the people that it has our best interests in mind.

—School teacher and political activist

Stirrings preceded uprising

Yajalon, Chiapas, Mexico—After years of poverty, a good segment of the indigenous population has decided they have nothing left to lose. Most of the poor in the region haven't had access to any kind of education or health care.

Justice through peaceful demonstrations throughout the years (to call attention to their needs and their dues) have been virtually ignored. In 1992 the notoriety of the Columbus protests around the world perhaps in part encouraged participation in marches for land reform and other peaceful demonstrations. There were also land takeovers which were quickly repressed.

Last year thousands marched throughout the diocese on many occasions for land reform and for the release of the priest Joel Padron, jailed ostensibly for stealing three chickens. In fact, he lived in a very politically active town and was seen as an agitator, apparently by people like the then-governor Patrocinio Gonzalez Garrido.

There seems to be an overall support for the rebels' reasons, if not for all their tactics. There are apparently quite a few women among them.

A month before the rebel activity, Nestle workers went on strike. I don't believe there are any direct connections between the strikers and the rebels, but they are clearly responding to the same problems.

—Liberation theologian

Decaying state of the nation

(continued from page 1)

doing on these things here at home?"

It was not the first time he had invoked and twisted Dr. King's name to his purposes. In November in Memphis he had asserted that if King were alive he would be dismayed most at the "Black on Black violence" today. Although a number of Black leaders like Jesse Jackson have been pushing that same line, Clinton's hypocrisy was immediately exposed by the Black community. Roger Wilkins—the most moderate of civil rights activists and now history professor at George Mason University—issued this sharp critique: "It's despicable for the President not to offer a jobs program when he offers all this gratuitous advice on our behavior." Even such a conservative as Clarence Page blasted the "efforts to politically sanitize King's memory," pointing out that "King called for a guaranteed income for all Americans. Clinton's crime bill offers poor youths prison 'boot camps.'"

While Clinton attempted to defend his record against such attacks, having five Black cabinet members is hardly the kind of jobs program Black America had in mind—and, at Howard, Clinton acknowledged there is still much to be done. All he offered was the so-called "empowerment zones" giving tax breaks to businesses that Congress approved last year.

Although a genuine "jobs program" remains Clinton's key unfulfilled promise, it is not all that Black America is demanding in its continuous struggles against the deeply embedded racism of this land. As 1994 began, those struggles have already included everything from a threatened basketball boycott by the Black Coaches Association over a history of racist treatment—averted only when the Justice Department prepared to intervene—to the outpouring of over 2,000 "Black Women in the Academy" for a conference at MIT, who demanded a Kerner Commission-like report on their grievances. (See Diane Lee's report in "Woman as Reason," p. 2.)

Essay Article

(continued from page 5)

tion creates political space for a neo-fascist like Zhirinovskiy—or some other contender who tries to use the rallying cry of Russian nationalism in order to gather state power into a single hand.

In a word, what defines the context of Zhirinovskiy's ascent is not just the general economic crisis, but the specific form it has assumed at this degenerate stage of state-capitalism: the coexistence of "free market" restructuring with the drive to strengthen the "iron hand" of state power at a moment when the latter is facing great fragmentation and chaos.

The crucial thing to watch is how the rise of such retrogressive tendencies affects Moscow's relations with the 21 ethnic republics contained in the Russian federation. When he ran for president in 1991, Zhirinovskiy was alone in calling for the abolition of these ethnic republics. This is now being openly advocated by some of Yeltsin's spokesmen.⁷

This effort to unify the Russian state through recourse to the narrowest type of "great Russian chauvinism" has ominous implications. As Mihajlo Mihajlov recently wrote, "It is the best recipe for a civil war" which could be "ten times larger than in the former Yugoslavia—and a hundred times more dangerous because of nuclear weapons. We may need to avert a World War III."⁸

PHILOSOPHY AND REALITY

Russia's increasing turn toward greater authoritarianism and even neo-fascism has led some to compare the events there to the rise of Hitler in the 1930s. Such comparisons can of course be quite superficial; after all, the river of history is never crossed the same way twice. Yet a striking parallel between Germany in the 1930s and Russia today does exist in at least one respect: in both cases the turn to the Right flows from an impasse reached by the radical Left.

Hitler's rise to power resulted not just from an economic crisis, but also from the defeat of the German Revolution of 1923. The seeds of this defeat were planted with the murders of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht in 1919; they were killed by the forerunners of the Nazis, the Freikorps, after leaders of the German Social Democracy called for their deaths. By the 1930s, an even deadlier form of counter-revolution from within revolution emerged with the rise of Stalin, whose disastrous policies enabled Hitler to come to power.

Today's rise of neo-fascism on a world scale likewise flows from a defeat of the Left, one which arose fully from within the revolutionary movement. Its roots go back to the whole post-World War II era and reached a kind of closure in the 1980s, when in Grenada in 1983 a counter-revolution from within destroyed that revolution, giving Reagan an excuse to launch his imperialist invasion.

Far from just being a question of Grenada, it showed that the revolutionaries of our era had failed to address the question "what happens after" the revolution before the seizure of power in a way that would provide direction for the new stage of mass revolts. By the time the bankruptcy of all existing models of "socialism" became evident in the 1980s, this failure to articulate how revo-

JOB, JOB, JOB

Black unemployment, though it has generally been double white unemployment, now exceeds even that ratio—but a genuine "jobs program" is far from the need of Black America alone. Nonetheless, we were told in Clinton's "State of the Union" address on Jan. 25 that the American economy is "recovering," with inflation last year at the lowest rate in seven years, the Consumer Price Index rising two-tenths of a percent in December for an annual rate of 2.7% and some primarily smaller factories around the country even posting a few "Help Wanted" signs that had not been seen for many years. At just about the same time that these facts were reported, however, GTE, the largest local phone company, announced that it will be "cost cutting" 17,000 more jobs to keep up with high-tech changes.

Thus, while the layoffs may be ebbing, they are far from ending; some of the nation's largest employers—IBM, Xerox, GE, Eastman Kodak, GM, McDonnell Douglas, Boeing and scores of others—are continuing to cut their payrolls. Job creation lags far behind jobs lost (no less than 230,000 last year), with 60% of the new jobs created last year only part-time and low-paid positions. In short, some 15 million workers remain unemployed or underemployed despite the talk of an economic recovery.

It is clear that the economic and social crisis today is not confined to Russia, but is endemic to the stage capitalist production has reached globally. The actual state this nation must confront is measured in the fact that:

- After remaining high but steady for more than 15 years, the number of Americans on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recently exploded from 10.8 million in 1989 to 14.2 million today, with one out of every seven children now on AFDC.

- The Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy at Tufts University reports hunger is no longer a question only of single mothers, the ghettos and the un-

Where is Russia going?

lution could lead to a truly liberating society led to a massive collapse of the Left. It has left a void in which renescent fascism can now thrive.

The events in Russia today are unfolding within this historic context. New forces of opposition have arisen there, from women's liberation groups to militant rank-and-file workers' committees, from groups of independent socialists to anarcho-syndicalists. Yet these forces are being tested by the reemergence of some very old tendencies.

One expression of this is that unlike in Eastern Europe—where the collapse of the "Communist" regimes led its various Communist Parties to drop the mantle of socialism and anoint themselves as "democrats"—in Russia the old Stalinists continue to claim adherence to "socialism" and "Marxism-Leninism." Only now, many of them are forging alliances with fascists like Zhirinovskiy! In this situation, to avoid the philosophic labor of articulating for our day a new banner of liberation opposed to both state-capitalism that called itself "Communism" and "free market" capitalism can lead only to total isolation from the masses.

The masses clearly have no quarter with the Communists; they did not support them during their battles with Yeltsin in October. Nor did they come into the streets to support Yeltsin. While some conclude from this that the masses are "passive," it rather reflects their lack of interest in the available political alternatives—which is more than can be said of many "independent leftists" who still harbor a hidden nostalgia for the Plan and nationalized property.⁹ It is at any rate easier to speak of the "passivity" of the masses than to fill the void in the projection of a comprehensive concept of liberation.

Most radicals never imagined that a philosophy of liberation was needed to assure a successful revolution, since they took for granted they already knew the meaning of socialism—i.e., that it is one or another form of nationalized property. Yet those who opposed "actually existing socialism" for being state-capitalist societies likewise paid little heed to the need to restate Marx's Marxism as a comprehensive philosophy of revolution, as if the projection of a liberating vision of the future could be left to spontaneous action. We are paying the price for this now in the rise of an array of retrogressive tendencies. But this is not an irreversible situation.

Now that Russia is so clearly headed in the direction of rightist reaction, many who yesterday said it was predestined to move from totalitarian "Communism" to "free market" democracy will tomorrow proclaim, in similar unilinear fashion, that it has no choice but to endure statist dictatorship. This will no doubt be attributed to everything from "the Russian character" to the legacy of "Oriental despotism."

However, as Marx long ago showed in arguing against those who tried to interpret his ideas along the lines of a unilinear evolutionism, "everything depends on the historic circumstance in which it finds itself." If what Marx called "the Russian intellect" concentrates the living forces of the country by entering into a serious philosophic reconsideration of what the totality of Marx's Marxism means for today, then a basis for the regeneration of Russia's revolutionary legacy can indeed be laid. It is no simple task, but it is one to which Marxist-Humanism can make a vital contribution.

Jan. 21, 1994

9. See the statements of the "Party of Labour" group, in International Viewpoint.

employed; the majority of the poor people in this country work. Nonetheless, the Clinton administration has just made sure the minimum wage will not go up this year, fearing that an increase would diminish his chances to have business support for his health care plan.

- The class and race divides that have always characterized U.S. society have steadily deepened with today's sharpened crisis. It is not accidental that hate crimes against immigrants and minorities have proliferated into the fastest-growing form of violence in the U.S. this year; nor that the Klan was emboldened to rally against Martin Luther King's birthday at the Illinois capitol building and other state capitals. Despite the subfreezing temperatures, hundreds came out for a counter-rally.

BEING HEARD

In the face of such sharp endemic contradictions, the Clinton administration has just announced a million-dollar plan for a series of New England-style "town meetings" to "bring us together"—beginning with a few "practice" forums in cities like Boston, Detroit and Houston without television cameras, before the nationally televised programs projected for next winter. The Harvard economist, John Kenneth Galbraith, believes that "it may persuade us that our differences are less serious than we imagine," and Sheldon Hackney, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, which is directing the project, believes that the project will "give people a sense that they have been heard."

Just as the totally different self-organized "town meetings" of the first American Revolution were transformed into the "engines of revolution," so today, when the idea people are struggling for is the idea of a society based on new, truly human relations, what is needed is not a question of "being heard" in order to persuade us our grievances are "not serious," but in order to work out how to uproot this degenerate, sexist, racist, exploitative society unseparated from creating a new one. That is why *News & Letters* was created as a forum for all the voices from below unseparated from a philosophy of revolution for our age. For the real state of this nation today is reflected not just in a litany of the crimes of capitalism but in the continuing myriad struggles in thought and in practice against it and for a different world.

It is seen in the Latino homesteaders in East New York, locked in a battle with the city officials who are trying to evict them from their homes—25 families who call themselves C.A.U.S.E. (Citizens Against Unjust and Senseless Evictions) and who wrested a promise from Giuliani's administration to negotiate selling them the buildings they have rehabilitated and live in, after they demonstrated at his inauguration.

It is seen in the hundreds of gay high school students and their friends who lobbied and demonstrated at the statehouse in Boston so forcefully that Massachusetts will this year become the first state in the nation to outlaw discrimination against gay and lesbian students in public schools.

It is surely seen in the way the great earthquake that Los Angeles has just suffered was not the only thing that has shaken that capitalist state—for it has been shaken even more profoundly, on the one hand, by the deep unemployment since the demise of the defense industries, and on the other, by the L.A. rebellion when the Black and Latino masses put American civilization on trial.

The state of this nation is seen, in short, in all the struggles of the rank-and-file workers, the women, the youth, the minorities that appear in every issue of *News & Letters*—and are kept inseparable from the theoretical explorations and analyses, as we attempt to tear down the barriers between workers and intellectuals, between theory and practice, between means and end as a revolutionary act.

It is in that sense that N&L does not merely "record" the "state of the nation" but can help to reshape it on new beginnings.

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7. For a discussion on recent developments in Yeltsin's government concerning the national minorities, see Vera Tolz, "Thorny Road toward Federalism in Russia" in *RFE/RL Research Report*, Dec. 3, 1993.

8. Mihajlo Mihajlov, "Zhirinovskiy's Crude Appeal," *Christian Science Monitor*, Dec. 21, 1993.

Youth

Institutionalized youth fight mind control

by Lynn Hailey

I was locked up for six months in a mental hospital in Utah, both for being gay and for being an activist. In psychiatric evaluations, they constantly referred to my delusional thinking being evident in the fact that I believed a revolution would change society! The fact that I did clinic defense and was associated with a Marxist organization was further used to "incriminate" me.

Thousands of youth are currently imprisoned in mental hospitals and Residential Treatment Centers (RTCs) across the country. These "behavior modification" programs are used to destroy our identity and remold us into stereotypical images of how people "should" conform and what we "should" believe.

Beatings, seclusion, restraints and shock treatment are common. Food, clothing and sleep are "privileges" granted only with compliance to unfair rules and completion of meaningless tasks to determine whether or not one is sane. Youth, unlike institutionalized adults, are deprived of many basic human rights. They are forced to undergo intrusive body strip searches, have their mail withheld, and are not allowed to write or make phone calls.

These facilities are housed in fortress-like buildings surrounded by barbed wire with numerous locked doors. Communication between inmates is restricted under the guise of preventing a conspiracy to break the rules or to escape. Inmates still find ways to resist these restrictions. In the hospital I was in, an inmate scrawled "Welcome to Auschwitz" above a door. One boy who was assigned to do gardening rearranged the rocks in the front of the building to read, "Escape while you still can!"

OBEDIENCE TRAINING

Youth are trained in RTCs to obey simply for the sake of obedience. Some programs resemble boot camp, with every moment and movement structured and scheduled. This is done to break down people's resistance to "treatment" which, of course, is only done to "help" them. Other programs have only observation where the youth are housed 20 hours a day in small, stark white rooms. Without being allowed to read, watch TV or communicate with other people, the days stretch endlessly ahead.

One 15-year-old woman said, "Every part of the hospital alienates me more and more from freedom or even the hope of being free. I try to suppress this feeling of being buried alive, however the clanging of each door leaves an indelible imprint on my mind."

Most of the youth who are imprisoned in these institutions have done very little to warrant such torture. Parents can have their child "voluntarily" hospitalized for reasons like arguing, doing poorly in school, having values the parents don't agree with, or for being politically active. No thought is given to whether or not the youth is in fact volunteering. And youth have practically no rights in contesting this treatment.

Cops defend KKK

Springfield, Ill.—As "the men in blue" surrounded/protected the Illinois Capitol building on Jan. 16, the Sunday before Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan stood safely on the steps of the Capitol. The 55 KKK members were demonstrating in an attempt to stop MLK Day from being a national holiday.

The Klan waved confederate flags in the air, wore black masks, held coats of arms which displayed their symbols, and periodically threw one hand up into the air in a Hitler-like fashion. All this was strangely, yet fittingly coordinated to the sounds of Wagner and a country version of "Dixie."

It was a cold, snowy day with sub-zero temperatures. Hundreds demonstrated against the Klan from Chicago, Champaign-Urbana, Springfield, Decatur, and surrounding areas.

Students ranging from the ages of 10-25 gathered from Loyola University, University of Illinois, and other schools. Local teachers had their elementary-level 10-12 year old students come to the rally and hold signs that said "No KKK."

Marchers held signs that said "Fight Racism" and "Unite and Fight." The majority marched with leftist groups in individual circles rather than a united one. Angry individuals unassociated with the leftist organizations were also present. Protesters chanted, "No Nazis, No KKK, No Fascism in U.S.A.!" and to the police, "Blue by day, White by Night!"

The police felt it was their duty to "keep the situation under control" and beat people protesting against the KKK to do so. They held cans of mace, wore protective visors, and "carried a big stick." With the public represented in all ages, types, and races of people, the state police reflected only the U.S. government, and supported, once again, the ruling class and the fascists.

As I was demonstrating, a man approached me and asked, "Where is the KKK?" I responded, "Just look around you; they're the men in blue and the people carrying the cameras!" The man looked at me and said, "You've got a lot of nerve talking like that. The police are here to protect you." I walked away and thought about him for quite some time. The police, as demonstrated by the day's rally and ones in the 1960s, obviously didn't support us; they were in defense of the KKK. There wasn't a line of police facing the KKK, ready to stop violent actions; the police were facing, pushing, and beating the public! And the media—they filmed us and interviewed the KKK!

—Vijay Jhansi

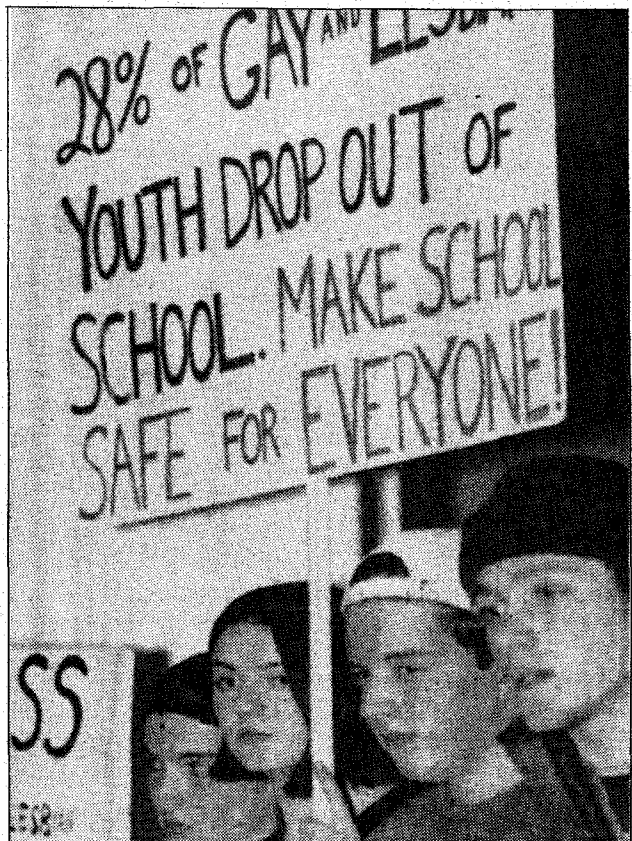
After I was kidnapped and taken to the hospital, I kept thinking, "They'll find out that this is all just a big mistake." But they kept telling me over and over again that I was emotionally disturbed.

LOCKED UP FOR MY IDEAS

I soon found out that it was my ideas they disagreed with. The first week I was there they forced me to read "Atlas Shrugged" to prove to me how good capitalism is. But it just showed me how much we really need a revolution. I was "encouraged" to wear skirts and makeup and to giggle and act dumb just to show me that I could act heterosexual!

Many youth, myself included, were incarcerated by the state government, which just illuminates how youth are treated as property in this society. Having custody of a child means you can do anything to them. The whole system is set up to defend the parents' "right" to send their child away. No thought is given to what the child actually needs or wants, even if it destroys who they are as a human being.

After my release I became active with a small group of youth called Students and Teens Opposing Psychiatric



The persistent lobbying and demonstrating of hundreds of gay, lesbian, and straight high school students forced the Massachusetts state legislature to pass the nation's first gay and lesbian anti-discrimination law that applies to public schools.

Abuse Network, which fights the psych system for locking kids up. We began publishing a magazine and our subscriptions grew to 6,000 in three months.

One young boy wrote in our magazine that "If I say that I am sick then I am trying to get attention, if I say that I am not then I am in denial. If I walk around the ward then I am pacing, if I sit down then I am withdrawn. If I do my homework well, then I am a perfectionist who is obsessive about details. If I don't do well, then I obviously don't care about education. And you know what, my doctor says, this hospital is good for me because it's consistent."

We need a society where youth are free to develop whichever way they choose. Where youth are not punished under the name of "help." And where freedom is something we all know.

Rebellion in Argentina

New York, N.Y.—This last Dec. 16, in the capital of one of the economically poorest provinces of Argentina, Santiago del Estero, government workers (who make up 80% of the province's labor force) took over the streets to protest both the reduction of their monthly salaries down 50%—from \$230 to \$115 and the fact that they had not been paid for three months. Provincial government officials and politicians have monthly salaries that go from \$3,500 to \$20,000. The presence of the police force to repress the demonstrators provoked a social upheaval that left 9 people dead, 120 injured and hundreds arrested.

The Governor's mansion, the Provincial Congress, the court houses, buses and cars, and the houses of "prominent" politicians were burned and destroyed by the masses. In one wall of the Governor's mansion the graffiti was very eloquent: "We had to burn this nest of rats." In other provinces, like President Menem's home province of La Rioja, daily demonstrations were held.

"People are starving!" the masses cried in Santiago. The same day of the upheaval, the President received a papal honor in the Vatican, and assured the Pope that in Argentina there is economic and political stability and that everybody agrees with his government's policies. Federal troops were sent to repress the workers protesting against those "miraculous" policies.

By Christmas, in the province of Buenos Aires and in the national capital, 14 prisons were taken over. Thousands of prisoners spend years in jail before being sentenced by a corrupt judicial power. Many of them are regularly tortured.

In a country of "political and economic miracles," the Catholic church is just beginning to wonder about social justice, and only a few voices of the Left, like the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo's Association (the mothers of the disappeared), are making themselves heard along with the masses. However, this upheaval is not a new phenomenon. In 1989, the preceding president, Raul Alfonsin, had to leave office before his term was over because of increasing mass discontent that ended in violent confrontations with federal troops (at the same time as the "caracazo" in Venezuela).

—Carlos Varela

Radiation experiments and today's nuclear agenda

Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary shocked the country Dec. 8 by announcing that over 800 human beings had been subjected to radioactive materials in numerous U.S.-sponsored experiments, starting in 1944. Although Congress had released a report on some of the tests in 1986, it was so little publicized that O'Leary herself seemed not have known of them.

The initial figure of 800 was quickly eclipsed by the tens of thousands of calls made or attempted to a special hotline for the victims. Appalling details of a few of the experiments have been oozing out:

- About 800 pregnant women were given radioactive iron at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., in the 1940s. Their children had an increased cancer rate.

- At Fernald State School in Waltham, Mass., 123 boys classified as "retarded" were told they were joining a science club; their parents were told they were being given a "special diet." They were not told it was radioactive milk.

- In the mid-1970s nearly 200 patients at various hospitals were placed in what one official called "virtually a sea of radiation" in a special room at the Oak Ridge, Tenn., nuclear weapons lab.

Immediately O'Leary began to reap the rewards for her disclosures, as the bourgeois pundits praised her "openness" to the skies. Few of them mentioned that the revelations came only a month after the Albuquerque Tribune published a series on the experiments.

Why expose past sins? To neutralize opposition to the present plans of the Department of Energy. As O'Leary herself explained: "The public, I hope, sees a past which is alarming and appalling. In the long run, if we handle this well, that might help us to establish a reason to be trusted.... We're pushing the national agenda forward and now I have this opportunity, maybe, of making some headway."¹

Clearly what has been preventing "headway" is public resistance to two crucial points on her agenda. First is the push to weaken toxic waste regulations, at least for the nuclear weapons production plants, which emit both nuclear waste and hazardous chemicals.

The second goal is to open new nuclear waste sites. Desperate to find a place to put the waste, O'Leary warned in April that the "solution to the storage may be

held captive by the people who oppose nuclear power."

YESTERDAY'S LIES, TODAY'S LIES

Already today's lies are embedded in the "truth"-telling about the past. The truth is that the experiments were conducted in the midst of a war against the Ban the Bomb movement. That war's casualties included both the scientific truth about the hazards of radiation and actual lives sacrificed to maintain rapid bomb production. Yet the nuclear establishment continues to claim that low levels of radiation are safe.

When evidence to the contrary began to come out in the early 1950s, the federal government trotted out pro-nuclear scientists to defend state-capitalism's arm's race by declaring that anyone who questioned the safety of such practices as open-air atomic bomb testing was hysterical or a Communist. Some dissident scientists were forced out of their jobs, like John Gofman and Arthur Tamplin of Lawrence Livermore Laboratory.

At the very same time the government was claiming that bomb test fallout was not dangerous, it was trying to fashion it into a weapon to poison "urban populations."² For that purpose, from 1944 to 1961 it made 250 releases of radioactive materials into the air, to float onto civilian populations.

The whole nuclear complex is still a force to be reckoned with. It is still stonewalling the compensation claims of those who lived downwind from the bomb tests, of uranium miners, of atomic veterans, of nuclear weapons production workers, of the weapons plants' neighbors. The nuclear threat did not end with the Cold War, even if the emphasis is shifting from weapons production to waste "management." It is the manifestation of what science is in state-capitalist society.

—Franklin Dmitryev

1. "Disclosing Radiation Tests Puts Official in Limelight," New York Times, Jan. 6, 1994.
 2. "Doctors of Death," New York Times, Jan. 13, 1994. In the same memo where he was asking for human guinea pigs for the development of these weapons, Dr. Joseph Hamilton casually admitted that the experiments had "a little of the Buchenwald touch," referring to the Nazis' lethal experimentation on human beings.

Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

On Jan. 18, talks resumed in Geneva to divide Bosnia into three ethnic parts. There is little expectation of success because the Serb and Croat sides refuse to accede to Bosnian insistence on an improved territorial division.

Under these circumstances, and especially after the results of U.S. President Clinton's NATO summit meeting, the siege of Sarajevo and other cities will continue through the harsh winter. The resuscitated threat to use air strikes against Serb forces shelling Sarajevo and halting vital aid there, and to other cities, was dismissed by Serb leaders as a "storm in a tea cup." It is clear U.S. and European rulers agreed not to let intervention in Bosnia hinder consensus in other areas, mainly relations with Russia and East Europe.

International news has focused on Sarajevo after Serbian forces intensified their terrorist shelling barrage. But the Serbian military is continuing the genocidal campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Muslim population trapped in Srebrenica, Zepa and Gorazde as well. In Mostar, Croatian forces have resumed shelling after driving thousands of Bosnian Muslims into the eastern half of the city and blowing up the bridge which had united Mostar's people for centuries.

The war has produced ramifications within Serbia and Croatia as well. The Serbian economy is in shambles. President Milosevic, leader of Serbian aggression, blames the crisis entirely on Western sanctions in an effort to whip up further nationalist frenzy and deflect criticism away from his government. The average monthly wage is

Middle East peace accord

Despite efforts by Clinton to reopen Israeli-Syrian negotiations, the real key to the Middle East situation is how the September peace agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has been severely undermined in the four months since PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had their famous handshake in Washington on Sept. 13. Rabin has done nothing whatsoever to implement the accords. He has allowed the Dec. 13 deadline to turn over the Gaza strip and Jericho to PLO administration to slip by. He has allowed his soldiers to continue to hunt down and kill Palestinian leaders. He continues to hold 16,000 Arab political prisoners.

But the disillusionment of the Arab masses also lies at Arafat's door. Arafat has acted in an increasingly high-handed fashion, refusing to consult even his own fellow leaders, let alone the various tendencies in the Palestinian movement, all the while traveling the world and meeting with people like the Queen of England. Since August, Stalinist factions of the PLO and Islamic fundamentalists have united in a rejection front which has accused Arafat of selling out, with some of them going so far as to call for his assassination.

This type of opposition was to be expected, but in recent weeks, even formerly pro-Arafat groups in the territories as well as leading Palestinian writers and intellectuals have begun openly to criticize Arafat. They say he has been acting more like a Middle Eastern dictator such as Egypt's Hosni Mubarak than as the leader of a liberation movement with roots in the masses. They fear that he wants to exercise dictatorial control if he can ever get the Israelis to implement self-rule in Gaza and Jericho.

Rulers play politics while Bosnians die

now a meaningless \$2 and dropping, and many state workers are being paid partly with food.

Strikes by miners, railroad engineers and other workers have broken out. Milosevic expanded the national police last year, and recently responded to civil unrest with a media campaign stating the willingness of the Army to suppress any disturbances. On the political level, alternatives in recent elections in Serbia and Croatia emerged in a putrid collection of rabid nationalists, fascists, monarchists and criminals even further to the right of Milosevic and Tudjman.

Recent reports indicate some successes by the Bosnian Army. It isn't only military victories which have sustained the Bosnian people thus far, it is also the goal of a multiethnic society. Zlato Dizdarevic, a journalist for *Oslobodjenje* (Liberation), the only independent daily paper still publishing in Sarajevo, discussed the situation



India votes Left

Voters gave a stinging defeat to candidates from the Hindu chauvinist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian Peoples Party) in elections held in four Indian states. These were the very states in which the BJP had won in 1991. In one of them, Uttar Pradesh (population 140 million), the winning slate united the Socialist Party and the newly prominent Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP, Party of the Disinherited), the latter supported by lower-caste Hindus and Dalits (so-called Untouchables). Support also came from Muslims and tribal groups.

As against the 1991 elections or the riots of 1992-93, this time poor and low-caste Hindus repudiated the call of Hindu chauvinism, but did not return to the governing Congress Party either, which fared even worse than did the BJP. The latter seemed to draw many votes from upper-caste Hindus.

For now at least, India may have escaped the threat of a fundamentalist takeover, although it should be noted that the BJP did win a majority in the capital, New Delhi. Also experience has shown that—as in West Bengal with the Communists over the past decades, or more recently in Bihar with a similar slate to that which won in Uttar Pradesh—when the established Left comes to power, its reformist programs give a few government jobs to members of the oppressed groups, but do little to change the conditions of life and labor of the masses.

in a speech in the U.S. (Christian Science Monitor, Dec. 28, 1993):

Ironically the majority of Muslims in Bosnia are against Islamization. No one calls for a Muslim Bosnia except the international community in its plan to divide Bosnia. Amazingly only the Muslims of Bosnia are against that plan. What if the multiethnic state in Bosnia is destroyed? What does that mean for other multiethnic states in the world? What does that mean for the U.S., the world's biggest multiethnic state? Our problem is more than a moral problem for the U.S. It is a real political problem. The U.S. cannot accept fascism and racism in Europe and think it has no long-term effect in America....

The greatest threat to the aggressors outside Sarajevo is everyday normal life.... This siege is a siege against normal life. Americans should realize that normal life in Sarajevo actually shows the happiness of living together. It means that a multiethnic and multireligious history is real. It means tolerance and love are possible. Normal life for us means that there is no chance for fascism and racism....

We ask: How is it possible for something like this to happen at the end of the century in the heart of Europe? How is it possible that all the basic principles of civilization... are proving to be a joke?... Maybe we are again at the beginning of a historical period where force is everything.... If that is true, then in Sarajevo we want to be alone. Because we are not a part of that world. But if that is not true, I can tell you only one thing. Even if you don't care about me or about us, at least care about yourselves.

Genocide in Burundi

Since late October, the tiny Central African land of Burundi has been bathed in blood. The world media and political leaders avert their eyes as the Hutu majority (85% of the population), suffers massacre and oppression at the hands of the long-dominant Tutsi ethnic group (15% of the population). Last spring, Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu, was elected president for the first time. He preached majority rule but also ethnic reconciliation, appointing a cabinet that was half Tutsi. But in October, the virtually all-Tutsi army killed the president.

The long-suppressed Hutu majority then rose up and began attacking Tutsis, including civilians. The army responded publicly by denying that its top officers had anything to do with the coup, and by inviting the surviving members of the government to come back. So far, the latter have not dared to do so, remaining holed up under heavy guard in a hotel in the capital.

Outside the capital, however, the army has been going through Hutu areas in an orgy of violence and death. In 1972, similar army massacres after a Hutu rebellion killed 150,000 Hutu, but today's death toll may be even higher. Then as now, the army has made educated Hutus a particular target.

An additional 800,000 people, also mainly Hutus, have fled to refugee camps in neighboring Rwanda and Tanzania. Deaths from disease are mounting in these camps. A promised force of 200 soldiers from the Organization of African Unity to serve as bodyguards for the remnants of the elected government did not arrive until late December. The events in Burundi have also raised tensions between ethnic groups in neighboring Rwanda and Zaire, apparently "inspiring" the Zairean dictator Mobutu Sese Seko to embark on his own version of "ethnic cleansing," forcing thousands to flee the country.

Bangladesh writer threatened

Muslim fundamentalist extremists in Bangladesh issued a death sentence against Taslima Nasrin, a feminist writer, poet and journalist, for her campaign for women's freedom. The mullah who called for Nasrin's execution labeled her "worse than a prostitute" and a traitor for denouncing the persecution of Bangladesh's Hindu minority. Nasrin's writings include *Nirbachita Column* (1991) which details the oppression of women in a male-dominated society and culture. Last summer, fundamentalist clerics pressured the government to ban her novel *Shame* (1992), which depicted the attack by Muslims on a Hindu family in the aftermath of the razing of the Babri mosque in India by Hindu extremists.

Despite the price the mullahs have put on her head, Nasrin refuses to be silent. She wrote of women brutalized and murdered under Islamic law, and criticized the Bangladesh government, whose president is a woman, for succumbing to extremist influence:

...I will not be silenced. Everywhere I look I see women being mistreated, and their oppression justified in the name of religion. Is it not my moral responsibility to protest? Some men would keep women in chains—veiled, illiterate and in the kitchen. There are 60 million women in my country; not more than 15% of them can read and write. How can Bangladesh become a modern country and find its place in the world when it is dragged backward by reactionary attitudes toward half its people?...

The mullahs who would murder me will kill everything progressive in Bangladesh if they are allowed to prevail. It is my duty to try to protect my beautiful country from them. I call on all those who share my values to help me defend my rights. By doing so, they will help save Bangladesh.

Who We Are and What We Stand For

News and Letters Committees is an organization of Marxist-Humanists that stands for the abolition of capitalism, whether in its private property form as in the U.S., or its state property form, as in Russia or China. We stand for the development of new human relations, what Marx first called a new Humanism.

News & Letters was founded in 1955, the year of the Detroit wildcat strikes against Automation and the Montgomery Bus Boycott against segregation—activities which signaled a new movement from practice that was itself a form of theory. News & Letters was created so that the voices of revolt from below could be heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation. We have organized ourselves into a committee form of organization rather than any elitist party "to lead."

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910-87), founder of the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism, became Chairwoman of the National Editorial Board and National Chairwoman of the Committees from its founding in 1987. Charles Denby (1907-83), a Black production worker, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, became editor of the paper from 1955 to 1983. Dunayevskaya's works *Marxism and Freedom...from 1776 until Today* (1958); *Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* (1973), and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1982) spell out the philosophic ground of Marx's Humanism internationally, as *American Civilization on Trial* concretizes it on the American scene and shows the two-way road between the U.S. and Africa. These works challenge post-Marx Marxists to return to Marx's Marxism.

The new visions of the future that Dunayevskaya left us in her work from the 1940s to the 1980s are

rooted in her rediscovery of Marx's Marxism in its original form as a "new Humanism" and in her re-creation of that philosophy for our age as "Marxist-Humanism." The development of the Marxist-Humanism of Dunayevskaya is recorded in the documents on microfilm and open to all under the title *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection-Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of Its World Development*, on deposit at the Wayne State University Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in Detroit, Michigan.

Dunayevskaya's philosophic comprehension of her creation and development of Marxist-Humanism, especially as expressed in her 1980s writings, presents the vantage point for re-creating her ideas anew. Seeking to grasp that vantage point for ourselves and make it available to all who struggle for freedom, we have published Dunayevskaya's original 1953 philosophic breakthrough and her final 1987 Presentation on the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy in *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (1989), and have donated new supplementary volumes to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection. News and Letters Committees aims at developing and concretizing this body of ideas for our time.

In opposing this capitalistic, racist, sexist, exploitative society, we participate in all class and freedom struggles, nationally and internationally. As our Constitution states: "It is our aim...to promote the firmest unity among workers, Blacks and other minorities, women, youth and those intellectuals who have broken with the ruling bureaucracy of both capital and labor." We do not separate mass activities from the activity of thinking. Send for a copy of the Constitution of News and Letters Committees.